

**CITY UPON THE ATLANTIC TIDES: MERCHANTS, PIRATES, AND THE
SEAFARING COMMUNITY OF BOSTON, 1689 – 1748**

by

Steven John James Pitt

B.A. in History, Buffalo State College, SUNY, 2005

M.A. in History, University at Buffalo, SUNY, 2008

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This dissertation was presented

by

Steven John James Pitt

It was defended on

June 26, 2015

and approved by

Jennifer Gaynor, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of History and Anthropology, University
at Buffalo, SUNY

Van Beck Hall, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of History

Patrick Manning, PhD, Professor, Department of History

Dissertation Advisor: Marcus Rediker, PhD, Professor, Department of History

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This dissertation examines colonial America's maritime history through the lens of its most developed and powerful port city – Boston – and an Atlantic economic system reliant on ships and sailors. The maritime perspective fills significant gaps in colonial Boston's historiography, ranging from transformative events such as the 1689 revolution and the town's dramatic economic rise and decline. The port city perspective, meanwhile, anchors the maritime history in a fixed historical trajectory with familiar actors, vessels, and shipping routes, revealing the centrality of maritime labor, impressment, piracy, and trade in the Atlantic from 1689 to 1748. In pursuit of the elusive sailor and ship, this dissertation draws on merchant accounts and letters, ships' papers and logbooks, court records and sailor depositions, state papers, newspapers, customs records, sermons, diaries, political and economic tracts, and travel literature. The results of this investigation demonstrate that maritime labor created wealth, stability, and security in colonial Boston, underscoring the profound symbiotic relationship between the port and the ships and seafarers upon which it depended.

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Annabelle reminds me on daily basis that life is more than a successful career and swift climb to the top. Our adventures together to the Pittsburgh Zoo, Phipps Conservatory, Blue Slide Park, and Schenley Park in Pittsburgh and East Point Sanctuary in Maine where we climb on rocks, scour the beach for sea glass, and talk about ships, birds, and snakes will always be my most precious times. Thanks also to my son, Josiah; his voyage at the time of writing this has just begun but we will soon make lasting memories of our own. My wife, Julia, may not be that interested in sailors, pirates, and merchants but she is interested in and supportive of me and my dreams and has been since we were in high school together at sixteen. My mother, Susan, deserves singular praise for not only raising me under difficult circumstances after my father's untimely death but also for finding the time to read to a small child almost every night and encourage his love of history as he grew older. She has been a constant source of support through this project and others, reading and editing all of my scribbling, sometimes twice or more. I dedicate this dissertation to her.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The great Atlantic tide “flowed over our Wharffs” and into the streets of Boston to “so surprising a heighth, that we could sail in Boats in the Street from the South Battery to the Rise of the Ground at King-Street.” Water rapidly filled the cellars of homes, warehouses, and shops along the waterfront, destroying merchant goods, shipbuilding tools, supplies and foodstuffs meant to last New England’s long, cold winters. Flood waters inundated “lower Rooms” everywhere and many townsfolk “were oblig’d to run away with their Meat half dress’d upon their Spits and in their Potts into their Neighbours, or into their upper Rooms, their Fire being all put out, and the wood floating about the Rooms.” The deluge damaged thousands of pounds of property. Most waterfront families were blissfully ignorant of the disaster befalling them on that fateful morning of February 24, 1723, as most were attending services further inland at the North Church in Clark’s Square.¹

The Reverend Cotton Mather addressed his congregation with a newly prepared sermon most appropriately entitled “The Voice of GOD in a Tempest.” The howling winds and gathering storm of “Hail, Rain, and Snow” over the previous day and night had inspired Mather to address his growing concerns that avarice, blasphemy, and irreligiousness ran rampant in God’s chosen “Citty upon a Hill.” He condemned the growing materialistic desires and pursuit of profits that the Atlantic economy had elicited among the wealthy elites of his congregation:

LET the *Uncertain Riches*, on which we see *One Element* this Day make such Depredations, and, GOD *knows how soon Another may do more!* – have no more so large a room in our Hearts, but let our *Affections* be more *set upon the things that are Above*; where *Tides* can’t *break thro’ & Spoil*; and where we have *Better & a Lasting Substance*.

¹ *Boston News-letter* 28 February 1723; “Natural History” *Boston News-letter* 28 March 1723; *New England Courant* 4 March 1723.

When the church doors finally opened around noon, Mather's flock "found that GOD had in an uncommon and surprizing manner, poured the Waters of the Sea upon the Earth." Many parishioners had to be "carry'd to their Houses in Canooes." As the tide slowly receded from the streets of Boston, it carried the material wealth of merchants – the imported English goods, often paid for with labor and blood of sailors and slaves – out into the wider Atlantic Ocean.²

The tides that submerged Boston's waterfront in 1723 gave the merchant community a feel of the watery world of the port's seafaring population, which formed the cornerstone of Boston's economy. Without a poorly paid class of sailors to increase merchants' profits, Boston would have had no magnificent wharves, such as the famous Long Wharf built in 1710. Nor would Boston merchants have enjoyed houses of "Brick, Stone, Lime," which were "very stately" and "handsomely contrived." Although merchants regularly touted their own industry in Boston's rise, some contemporaries comprehended that the town's prosperity rested on the backs – sometimes literally – of seafaring men. For instance, Cotton Mather declared in 1699, "we are beholden to them, for a very great part of those Enjoyments, whereby our Lives are sweetened. The *Invaluable Benefits*, by means of our *Seafaring Friends* done unto us, obliged us to no little Value and Friendship for them." Yet Boston's development, paradoxically, coincided with merchants' devaluing the labor and lives of sailors.³

² For a good discussion of John Winthrop's "Citty upon a Hill" argument see, Darrett Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630- 1649* (New York: Norton, 1965), chap. 1; For attack on wealth see, Cotton Mather, *The Voice of GOD in a Tempest* (Boston, 1723), 8 and 17-19, quote at 19; *New England Courant* 4 March 1723.

³ For description of Boston's wealth see, John Dunton, *Letters from New England, 1686*, (Boston: Prince Society, 1867), 67-68; Cotton Mather, *The Religious Marriner* (Boston, 1700), 9.

* * *

In the late seventeenth-century Boston emerged as English America's foremost colonial hub of shipping, ship building and outfitting, and maritime labor. Every spring, typically in April or May, Boston's merchants anxiously waited on the incoming Atlantic tides to bring the first ships from England. English ships and ship captains carried news of events in Europe, personal correspondence, and European goods. Boston's mercantile elite then decided where the outgoing Atlantic tides should take their own ships, sailors, cargoes, and news. On some days, the peaceful and rhythmic ebb and flow of the Atlantic tides mirrored the relationship of Boston elites to the seafaring community. At other times, emulating the deluge of 1723, the Atlantic tides violently swept ashore and sailors challenged elite prerogatives through riot, desertion, mutiny, and piracy, disrupting the nascent capitalist system of commerce that generated merchant wealth.

Boston's maritime focus was practically preordained with its founding. The Puritans, under John Winthrop's guidance, settled the "tadpole-shaped peninsula" called Shawmut by the local Indian tribes in the summer of 1630. By September, enough settlers had arrived to warrant a proper English name – Boston. Even so, the settlement had few appealing qualities. It had little arable land for farming or grazing and little wood for firewood or construction of buildings. As one contemporary, William Wood, described, "Their [Bostonians] greatest wants be Wood, and Meadow-ground, which never were in that place." Boston's hinterland was unable to support a large population or produce tradable goods for an Atlantic market. On the positive side, the peninsula lacked swarms of mosquitos, rattlesnakes, and wolves. Boston's true saving grace, however, was the excellent harbor that connected the town to wider Atlantic trade networks. In 1635, Wood foresaw Boston's potential in this regard. He noted that Boston was "fittest for such as can Trade into *England*, for such commodities as the Countrey wants, being the chiefe place

for shipping and Merchandize.” Boston’s geography ensured that the town’s inhabitants would look seaward for their livelihood and “in the long run the influence of the Atlantic was to predominate in the town.”⁴

The persecution of Puritans in England and the subsequent emigration caused Boston to grow steadily. Within twenty years the town consisted of 3,000 people. Immigrants to Boston generally came from the ranks of merchants, skilled tradesmen, and mariners. Some immigrants brought capital and connections to develop Boston’s shipbuilding and trade. In the 1640s, the town established close trading ties with the West Indies and Iberian Peninsula, exchanging fish and timber for silver, gold, and wine. By the 1650s, Captain Edward Johnson, a founder of Woburn, Massachusetts, proclaimed it could not “be imagined, that this Wilderness should turn a mart for Merchants in so short a space, Holland, France, Spain and Portugal coming hither for trade. Shipping, he claimed, was “going on gallantly.” The North End of Boston matured into a vibrant maritime community of sailors, shipbuilders, and merchants with a contrasting mix of lavish houses and low taverns catering to the seafaring population. In 1686, a visitor remarked that Boston appeared and felt like Bristol in England, which only London surpassed in terms of its shipping and seafaring population. A little over a decade later, Cotton Mather, the minister of North Church, affirmed that “Seafaring people” were “a very *numerous* People, in my Congregation.” By 1723, when the great tide swallowed the waterfront community, Boston had at least fifty-eight wharves and shipyards jutting out into the harbor, most of which were located

⁴ Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, chap. 2, quote at 24; William Wood, *New-England's Prospect* (Boston: Publications of the Prince Society, 1858), 42; Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 254.

in the North End. Meanwhile, the names of streets, Ship Street, Fish Street, and Fleet Street, told the town's history.⁵

Boston was colonial America's leading port. By the 1680s, the population exceeded 6,000, the largest among the English American colonies with Port Royal, Jamaica second with 4,500 inhabitants. In 1735, Boston maintained a population twice the size of Philadelphia and New York. Boston retained its frontrunner status until approximately 1760 when Philadelphia surpassed the port with a population of over 17,000. In terms of shipping, Boston's entrances and clearances exceeded other North American ports until the eve of the American Revolution. In 1723, New York had roughly a third and Philadelphia roughly fifteen percent of Boston's arriving and departing vessels. In 1713, Boston had 139 ships (100-400 tons) enter or clear. After that year, Boston newspapers no longer consistently identified vessel types in their "entrances and clearances" section because there were too many to count. Thirty-two years later, Philadelphia's shipping had gained on Boston with entrances and clearances equaling a little under two-thirds the number of Boston's but only fifty-seven vessels identified as "ships."⁶

Tables 1 and 2 in the appendix demonstrate Boston's maritime supremacy during the first half of the eighteenth century through statistics gathered from customs records in newspapers.

Previous attempts to represent Boston's colonial shipping have relied on post-1750 data. For

⁵ Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 147; J. Franklin Jameson ed., *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 247; Dunton, *Letters from New England, 1686*, 67-68; *Diary of Cotton Mather*, vol. 1: 1681-1709; vol. 2: 1709-24, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), 2:323; Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 172.

⁶ For population figures of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia see, Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), appendix, table 13, 407-408; For shipping figures of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia see, Boston: Tables 1 and 2; New York: "Entrances and Clearances," *American Weekly Mercury* 1723 and *New York Weekly Journal* 1734; Philadelphia: "Entrances and Clearances," *American Weekly Mercury* 1723 and *Pennsylvania Gazette* 1745; For 1730 results for all three ports see, Arthur L. Jensen, *The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia* (Madison, Wisconsin: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963), appendix, table 3, 292.

example, economic historians James Shepherd and Gary Walton relied heavily on shipping and tonnage data from 1768-72 to portray Boston's and New England's trade for the entire colonial period.⁷ These tables, based on new data, provide valuable insights into continuity and change in Boston's shipping for specific years and over multiple decades. The data highlights the importance of trade with England, North Carolina (naval stores), and the Bays of Campeche and Honduras (logwood). The data also allow us to trace the activities of specific Boston ship captains and ships. The tables also reveal the importance of events such as Spanish capture of the Bay of Campeche in late 1716 and the eruption of piracy on New England's coast, which impacted Boston's merchants and trade.

How did Boston with its poor hinterland establish and maintain such a dominant economic position and become, in the words of King Charles II's customs agent, Edward Randolph, "the Metropolis of ye American Plantacons" for the better part of a century?⁸ The answer rests in the labor of its seafaring and waterfront communities. Population statistics support this conclusion. An analysis of Boston's shipping suggests that in 1706 the town required 1,100 to 1,600 officers and sailors to carry on its trade. By 1728, the vessels coming into and out of Boston needed 2,200 to 3,300 seafarers.⁹ It is difficult to ascertain how many of

⁷ James F. Shepherd and Gary M. Walton, *Shipping, Maritime Trade, and the Economic Development of Colonial North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); see also, Murray G. Lawson, "The Routes of Boston's Trade, 1752-1765," in *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Transactions, 1947-1951* (Boston, 1959), 81-120.

⁸ Edward Randolph to Coventry, June 17, 1676, in Robert Toppan, ed., *Edward Randolph: Including His Letters and Official Papers from the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies in America*, 7 vols. (Boston, 1898), 2: 203.

⁹ These approximations are derived from my work on entrances in Tables 1 and 2 and eighty-seven Boston-based portledge bills collected from various archives for the colonial period. In 1706, the list of vessels entering Boston was fifteen percent ships, eighteen percent brigs, sixty-two percent sloops, and five percent ketches. The customs data for 1728 does not include vessel types so I extrapolated the 1706 percentages to 1728. This means the estimate for that year is probably undervalued, as the number of ships entering Boston most likely increased. I also took into consideration that coasters averaged four entries into Boston per year. I therefore divided the number of sailors necessary to man the coasters by four. I arrived at the required number of seafarers based on the typical range of tonnage for these vessel types and Ralph Davis's figures for the per ton average worked by seafarers see, Ralph

these men actually called Boston home but historians have estimated that around 1700 at least 1,000 sailors lived in Boston, which amounted to fifteen percent of the entire population. As Boston's shipping increased, this number likely followed suit. Meanwhile, the tradesmen who outfitted and built ships constituted twenty-five to forty percent of Boston's working population during the colonial period. The labor of these seafarers and shipbuilders and outfitters supported a relatively large merchant class that equaled another fifteen to twenty percent of the "working" population. The maritime economy therefore employed close to seventy percent of the male population. As suggested in Chapter 6, any Bostonian would have been hard-pressed to subsist without financial connections to the waterfront.¹⁰

This dissertation examines colonial America's maritime history through the lens of its most developed and powerful port city – Boston – and an Atlantic economic system reliant on ships and sailors. The maritime perspective fills significant gaps in colonial Boston's historiography, ranging from transformative events such as the 1689 revolution and the town's

Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the 17th & 18th Centuries* (London: Macmillan & CO LTD, 1962), 58-59.

¹⁰ For sailor population see, Curtis P. Nettels, *The Money Supply of the American Colonies before 1720* (Clifton: A.M. Kelley, 1934), 102; For population of tradesmen and merchants see, Jacob M. Price, "Economic Function and Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974): 123-86, appendix C, 177-183 and Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, appendix, table 1, 387-391. For a good understanding of Boston's economy minus the emphasis on seafarers and logwood see, Nettels, *The Money Supply*; W.T. Baxter, *The House of Hancock: Business in Boston, 1724-1775* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc, 1965 [1945]); James Lydon, "Fish and Flour for Gold: Southern Europe and the Colonial American Balance of Payments," *The Business History Review*, 39 (Summer, 1965): 171-183; Price, "Economic Function," 123-186; Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press, 1979); James Lydon, "Fish for Gold: The Massachusetts Fish Trade with Iberia, 1700-1773" *The New England Quarterly* 54 (December, 1981): 539-582; Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995); David Hancock, "Markets, Merchants, and the Wider World of Boston Wine, 1700-1775," in *Entrepreneurs: The Boston Business Community, 1750-1850* edited by Conrad Wright and Katheryn Viens (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1997): 63-95; Margaret Newell, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998); Margaret Ellen Newell, "The Birth of New England in the Atlantic Economy: From its Beginning to 1770" in *Engines of Enterprise: An Economic History of New England* edited by Peter Temin (Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 75-92; Hunter, *Purchasing identity in the Atlantic world*. Gary Nash's excellent study, *The Urban Crucible*, has some material on sailors in Boston, especially in regards to their wages, but he does not follow them out into the Atlantic nor does he effectively connect Boston to the Atlantic economy.

dramatic economic rise and decline. The port city perspective, meanwhile, anchors the maritime history in a fixed historical trajectory with familiar actors, vessels, and shipping routes, revealing the centrality of maritime labor, impressment, piracy, and trade in the Atlantic from 1689 to 1748. By employing the metaphor of the Atlantic tides – linking the port to the sea and vice versa – this study underscores the profound symbiotic relationship between Boston and the ships and seafarers upon which it depended.

Many historians have treated ships and seafarers as peripheral to this Atlantic port city. They have privileged merchants, politicians, commodities, trade routes, and economic development while excluding the ships, ship captains, and seamen on which they depended.¹¹ Historian Marcus Rediker has called this predisposition “terracentric” and argues that the resulting histories have refused “to consider the ocean as a real, material place of work and habitation, a place where identities have been formed, where history has been made.” Daniel Vickers, focusing on port towns, has similarly argued that we need to understand seafarers as human subjects that lived and worked within communities and not just stereotypical

¹¹ See note 10 above; Even a chapter on Boston’s maritime history neglects sailors, Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America’s Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600 – 2000* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), chap. 7. This bias is not unique to Boston but dominates port city studies see, John G. Clark, *New Orleans, 1718-1812: An Economic History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970); Franklin Knight and Peggy Liss eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991); David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Kenneth Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Camilla Townsend, *Tales of Two Cities: Race and Economic Culture in Early Republican North and South America* (Austin, Texas: Texas University Press, 2000); Gerrit Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-century Makassar* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004); Patrick O’Flanagan, *Port Cities of Atlantic Iberia, 1500-1900* (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008); Alejandro De La Fuente with César García Del Pino & Bernardo Iglesias Delgado, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660-1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For studies that give sailors a central role in their analysis of port cities, see, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*; Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); Craig Marin, “Coercion, Cooperation, and Conflict along the Charleston Waterfront, 1739-1785: Navigating the Social Waters of an Atlantic Port City” (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2007).

troublemakers apt to be ignored and disparaged. This study heeds both calls to action by populating ships, exploring transatlantic voyages, and demonstrating the seafaring community's impact on Boston.¹²

Sailors, because of their mobility and poverty, are notoriously difficult to study. Yet study them we must. In pursuit of the elusive sailor and ship, this dissertation employs and integrates a wide range of primary and secondary sources. It draws on merchant accounts and letters, ships' papers and logbooks, court records and sailor depositions, state papers, newspapers, customs records, sermons, diaries, political and economic tracts, and travel literature to examine Boston's seafaring community through both qualitative and quantitative methods. It engages with the historiography of colonial Boston, maritime history, and Atlantic history. The variety of primary and secondary sources allows the chapters of this dissertation to navigate between Boston's local social and economic conditions and critical events and experiences of seafarers, ship captains, and merchants in the wider Atlantic world.

Historians of colonial Boston in particular have been reluctant to embrace the port's maritime past beyond the merchant perspective and abstracted trade routes. They have instead tended to analyze Boston in the eighteenth century by looking forward to the Boston Tea Party, Boston Massacre, and some of the city's most famous revolutionaries. Many prominent historians therefore present a teleological narrative in which Boston steadily marches towards the American Revolution. Carl Bridenbaugh contends that the similar cosmopolitan and enlightened experiences of the elites in Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston led to a united front against the power of the British and "In so doing, ..., they transformed their

¹² Marcus Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 2-3; Daniel Vickers, "Beyond Jack Tar" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50(2) (April 1993): 418-424 and Vickers and Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea*.

communities from English colonial into American cities.” G.B. Warden argues that from 1689 to 1776, Boston went through successive revolutions in practice and thought, which subsequently culminated in the American Revolution. Gary Nash, meanwhile, narrates the coming of the American Revolution from the perspective of growing discontent among the lower and middling classes as social stratification increased in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia: “Thus, the history of the Revolution is in part the history of popular collective action and the puncturing of the gentry’s claim that their rule was legitimized by custom, law, and divine will.” As this dissertation will demonstrate, sailors had a much longer history of challenging elites’ privilege to “rule.”¹³

The chronology of this dissertation, 1689 to 1748, rejects the inevitability of the coming of the American Revolution by braiding together the chronologies of the maritime Atlantic with Boston’s rise and decline as an Atlantic port. The thread uniting these chronologies is the changing relationship among elite merchants and politicians, the waterfront’s tradesmen and laborers, and seafaring men as Boston became a central rather than peripheral node in the Atlantic economy, England’s Empire, and London-based credit networks. Many historians have argued that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 transformed Boston’s and New England’s economic, political, and social systems through new imperial and mercantile policies but none have considered the impact of these changes on the seafaring population, nor have they studied how maritime affairs shaped the new policies.¹⁴ There is a clear downward trajectory in the

¹³ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities In Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776*, (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 419; G.B. Warden, *Boston: 1689-1776* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970); Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 383-384.

¹⁴ Ricahrd S. Dunn, *Puritans and Yankee: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company INC., 1962); Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970); Phillip Haffenden, *New England in the English Nation, 1689-1713* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (United States of America: Rutgers University Press, 1981); J.M. Sosin, *English*

treatment of sailors after the town's 1689 Revolution, an event triggered by a mutiny among the crew of the Royal Navy frigate H.M.S. *Rose*, and adoption of maritime policies imported from England. Prior to 1689, Boston merchants supported illicit trade, privateering, and cooperation with pirates. Sailors received both wages and a privilege, which was space on board the vessel to ship their own commodities. This effectively made them shareholders in the voyage. The joint responsibilities and rewards increased cooperation while decreasing potential conflicts among all parties. Indeed, Boston court records during the 1680s are remarkable for the lack of disputes between ship captains and sailors or ship captains and merchants for that matter, which stands in direct contrast to the succeeding sixty years.¹⁵

Boston's 1689 Revolution had a vital role in changing customary relations between politicians, merchants, and the seafaring community. England's new king, William III of Orange, believed the revolution was an unwarranted power grab by Boston elites, although in reality their reluctant participation in the event protected the overthrown English officials from a waterfront mob. Boston elites sought to mollify King William by condemning previous irregularities in trade – practices that made Boston attractive for seafarers – and actively supporting his war with France. The war created many hardships for the maritime community. Politicians actively supported Royal Navy impressment of transatlantic seafarers and the port became a favored location for Royal Navy vessels. They also became executioners of pirates, who were previously courted for the economic benefits they bestowed upon small frontier towns, to further demonstrate their loyalty to England's vision for the American colonies.

America and the Revolution of 1688: Royal Administration and the Structure of Provincial Government (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

¹⁵ These assertions are based on a close analysis of Suffolk County Supreme Judicial Court Files (hereafter cited as SCSJCF), Massachusetts State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA) and Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas Record Books (hereafter cited as SCCPRB), MSA for the period of 1680 to 1748.

Merchants concurrently entered and embraced the credit and trade networks of their English counterparts in pursuit of manufactured goods and shipbuilding materials. New England's trade deficit with England skyrocketed and Boston merchants' account books reflected this imbalance. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, the trade imbalance averaged £51,489 per year. From 1730 to 1739, the deficit more than doubled, to an average of £137,728 per year.¹⁶ This importation debt had an important function in Boston's Atlantic economy. It created social connections and financial arrangements with London merchants that cemented Boston's status as leading purveyor of English manufactured goods to the rest of the North American colonies. This crucial position within England's network of trade also enabled the port to maintain its large merchant fleet and shipbuilding industry. The trade imbalance, however, put pressure on Boston merchants to increase remittances to England. They turned to logwood, a dyewood from the Bays of Campeche and Honduras used in the European textile and furniture industries, as a partial solution. The logwood trade catered to Boston's maritime strengths. It required the strong backs of sailors to harvest the wood and ships for transport. Conditions in the lagoons were harsh and the seafarers required close, sometimes abusive, oversight by ship captains. Closer ties with England after 1689 also led to the adoption of English mercantile practices that strove to abolish sailors' privileges and increasingly commodify and decrease the value of their labor. By the early 1700s, it appears the custom of granting privileges extended only to ship captains and mates. Impressment, early persecution of pirates, the harsh logwood trade, and adoption of English mercantile practices increasingly internationalized, marginalized, and exploited seafarers while merchants and waterfront tradesmen benefitted at their expense.

¹⁶ For New England's imports and exports to England see, Sir Charles Whitworth, *State of the Trade of Great Britain in its Imports and Exports, Progressively from the Year 1697* (London, 1776), 63-64.

This ruthless pursuit of profits at the expense of workers inspired thunderous jeremiads from ministers, which in modern times have in turn generated historiographical debates regarding the decline of Puritanism. Today most historians contend that there was no significant change in religious practice among the second and third generations of Puritans and that “declension,” so important to an earlier generation of historians, is a myth.¹⁷ Although personal religiosity may not have changed, it is clear in the study of the waterfront that earlier Puritan ideas, which limited material acquisition and the exploitation of others, no longer held sway. As historian Darrett Rutman aptly surmised, “In America, the acquisitive instincts of the contemporary Englishman would rush to the surface, overwhelming [John] Winthrop’s communal ideal.” Furthermore, in the pursuit of profits, Boston merchants had opened the gates to a significant population of foreign maritime laborers, who altered the cultural and religious make-up of the town during the early eighteenth century.¹⁸

Sailors recognized their central importance to Boston’s rise and refused to submit to their declining economic and social position in the town. They resisted impressment and work in the logwood trade through desertion, mutiny, riots, and violence. From 1716 to 1728, pirates

¹⁷ The historiographical debate over the decline of Puritanism is still alive and well despite attempts to bury the debate with the argument that declension was a myth and only lived within the minds of second and third generation New Englanders, see, Robert G. Pope, “New England versus the New England Mind: The Myth of Declension” *Journal of Social History* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1969-1970): 95 – 108. Pope argues against intellectual historians such as Perry Miller, in particular his work *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), who took at face value the jeremiads of ministers such as Increase and Cotton Mather. Meanwhile, Mark Valeri has recently argued that merchants and ministers worked together in order to justify and incorporate new commercial practices into Puritanism, see, Mark Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize. How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). For more on the decline of Puritanism and the reformation of manners, see, Richard Gildrie, *The Profane, the Civil, and the Godly: The Reformation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679-1749*, (United States: Pennsylvania State University, 1994) and David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Belief in Early New England*, (United States: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1989).

¹⁸ Rutman, *Winthrop’s Boston*, 22. For the influence of seamen on young men in Boston see, Steven J. J. Pitt, “Cotton Mather and Boston’s ‘Seafaring Tribe’” *The New England Quarterly* 85.2 (June 2012): 222–252. I agree, however, with Christine Leigh Heyrman that the experience of seafarers in Boston does not reflect the cultural and religious experiences of other New England seafarers see, Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984).

challenged the entire Atlantic economic system with their brazen attacks on the shipping of all nations. Boston's merchant fleet earned special retribution for the town's central role in persecuting and hanging pirates. Sailors became adept at using the local legal system and vice-admiralty courts to their advantage, causing merchants and ship captains consternation on a regular basis. The difficulties stemming from controlling a defiant maritime population decreased Boston merchants' profits and undoubtedly contributed to their decision to seek wealth outside of transatlantic shipping during the 1740s.

Boston elites undermined the town's maritime economy by mistreating the seafaring community through impressment and war profiteering at the expense of shipbuilding and transatlantic trade. In 1744, Boston's merchants, tired of what they considered meager profits or "Cutting and Shuffling" as one put it a few years earlier, pulled their capital out of shipbuilding industry, sold vessels engaged in the logwood and transatlantic trade, cut exports to England by almost half from the previous decade, and accepted large government contracts that gave immediate and large profits to wage war on France and supply English troops and vessels with supplies. Many of their London counterparts followed a similar strategy, reaping the economic benefits of war. War with France also initiated plans by Massachusetts Governor William Shirley to seize Louisbourg. In his quest for glory, Shirley zealously catered to the Royal Navy's heavy impressment demands. Mobile sailors fled to friendlier ports and foreign vessels avoided Boston, harming the ship outfitting industry. Philadelphia, New York, and Newport filled the void Boston left in shipping and shipbuilding. The anger of the remaining maritime community swelled and in November of 1747 erupted into a three day riot over impressment and injustice.

By 1748, the town's elites had thoroughly damaged the town's previous maritime economy but their own wealth had, at least in the short-term, increased.¹⁹

To summarize, between 1689 and 1748 Boston grew to economic dominance among all English American ports. Compared to its rivals, New York and Philadelphia, Boston had a poor hinterland and initially relied on exports of fish and timber to support its economic growth. By the 1710s, however, Salem, Marblehead, and Gloucester had taken control of the fish trade. Boston merchants turned their attention to the wider Atlantic trade networks and the ships and men who sailed them. They consequently built their empire on the labor of maritime workers, harvesting logwood from Spanish America, building and outfitting ships, and controlling the distribution of English manufactured goods to other North American colonies. These mutually reinforcing economic strategies are unexplored or underexplored in the history of Boston's rise because historians have long marginalized the lives and labor of workers who got wet. They are the key to the hidden history of colonial Boston.

¹⁹ Peter Faneuil to Benjamin Faneuil, September 7, 1738, Volume F-4, Faneuil Letterbook, 1737-1739, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, Harvard Business School (hereafter cited as HBS); Shirley had also recently lobbied for and obtained a position for his son as a Royal Navy officer in 1742, which likely factored into his pro-impressment policy. Governor William Shirley to the Duke of Newcastle, May 4, 1742 in Charles Henry Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander of America, 1731 – 1760* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 1: 86-87.

2.0 THE ROYAL NAVY AND BOSTON'S 1689 REVOLUTION

In spring 1689 revolution came to the shores of America with the news of William and Mary's takeover in England's "Glorious Revolution." Bostonians seized the moment to revolt against the "tyrannical" Governor Andros and his council. Most historians have seen Boston's revolution as fundamentally similar to England's revolution. Boston elites plotted behind the scenes, organized the lower classes, and brilliantly carried out a bloodless revolution – a "Protestant putsch" as Stephen Saunders Webb has coined it.¹ This romantic vision of the revolution has persisted and even dominated historical interpretation despite its weak evidential foundation. Boston elites did not plan the revolution that occurred on April 18, 1689 nor did they gain control of the situation until damage had already been done. Rather, the evidence overwhelmingly shows that Boston's Revolution of 1689 began in a mutiny aboard H.M.S. *Rose Frigate*, then stationed in Boston's harbor. Ferocious conflicts flowed off the ship and into Boston, igniting revolution.

This chapter traces how the Royal Navy's introduction to the provincial town of Boston impacted local politics, economics, and culture. It then segues into an analysis of the maritime origins of Boston's 1689 revolution, the revolution itself, and the aftermath. The results of this investigation present a hitherto unknown history of the 1689 revolution. The mutiny on H.M.S. *Rose* generated the necessary political and economic ties with England that were responsible for Boston's meteoric rise among English American ports. Boston's seafaring community suffered the consequences of closer connections to London as politicians and merchants adopted metropolitan attitudes and maritime policies.

¹ Stephen Saunders Webb, *Lord Churchill's Coup: The Anglo-American Empire and the Glorious Revolution Reconsidered* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 182.

* * *

In May 1686, the fifth-rate H.M.S. *Rose*, commanded by John George, arrived in Boston, becoming the port's first long-term station ship. The *Rose* immediately transformed Boston's politics, society, and economics. This floating icon of English power brought with it documents that annulled the Massachusetts Bay Charter of 1629, the foundation of Puritan power in the colony. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was forced to create a new interim government under Joseph Dudley. Few in Boston agreed with the changes taking place. Dudley, however, recognized the political pressure a Royal Navy frigate with twenty-eight cannons and more than a hundred men could exert on a small community and strategically employed it to his benefit. On May 21, he boarded the *Rose* with a few of his gentlemen friends, to a salute of twenty-one guns. He then did a victory tour of the harbor and was saluted by the forts on Castle Island in Boston Harbor and the South End of town. Samuel Sewall, a devout Puritan, merchant, and judge, downplayed the boisterous display but could not hide his dismay that the marriage of politics and religion in the Massachusetts Bay Colony had ended. The military had legitimized Dudley's rise and nullified the Massachusetts' Charter.²

Unlike Dudley, Edward Randolph failed to grasp the political and economic significance of introducing the *Rose* to Boston. For him the warship had one purpose – to serve his needs as the customs agent. Randolph's commission granted him the right to prosecute all vessels engaged in illicit trade in Boston Harbor. He expected to profit handsomely from this arrangement and Captain George and the *Rose* were to help him. Captain George had other plans for his ship and crew. Like Randolph, George planned to seize smugglers in Boston Harbor but

² Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, May 22, 1686, ADM 51/3955, The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA); M. Halsey Thomas ed., *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 2 vols. (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 1:115. Sewall notes that the Castle fired twenty-five guns and then the *Rose* responded but the *Rose's* logbook has the accurate account.

he would bring them before the vice-admiral (Dudley), not Randolph. George would then receive the full one third of the proceeds granted to Royal Navy officers for prizes. The legality of George's scheme had a weak foundation, as the harbor was Randolph's jurisdiction while George had full authority to halt smuggling and piracy on the high seas. Nevertheless, the audacious captain moved forward with his plot.³

The two men had many potential targets. Boston authorities had long skirted the Navigation Acts and nominally supported smuggling, considering it crucial to the town's economic well-being. The most egregious trade violation committed by Boston merchants was direct trade with other European countries. In the early 1670s, the problem became so dire that Parliament even toyed with the idea of blockading Boston's harbor. The third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74) permanently shelved that proposal. Yet the annulment of Massachusetts' Charter and the *Rose's* presence in Boston were, in part, a long overdue response to Boston's trade irregularities. Captain George's and Randolph's plans to seize ships violating the Navigation Acts in Boston's harbor had the potential to damage the profits of local merchants and the functioning of the entire economy.⁴

Captain George struck first in June 1686 and successfully brought smugglers before the vice-admiral. Randolph adamantly objected to George's encroachment into revenue streams he considered his own. He employed but a handful of deputies with authority to search incoming ships for illicit goods. He could not compete with the numerous boats and entire crew of the *Rose*. Soon a "warm dispute" developed between the two men. Randolph complained bitterly to

³ J.R. Tanner ed., *Pepy's Memoirs of the Royal Navy, 1679-1688* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 55-58. For more on ship captain's behavior during this time period, see, N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company Inc, 2004), 122-124.

⁴ Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (United States of America: Rutgers University Press, 1981), 25-27.

President Dudley. Dudley initially ignored the customs agent, allowing George to continue to seize ships in Boston Harbor. Randolph suspected collusion between Dudley, his council, and George in depriving him of his rightful money, which by early July he estimated to be above £500. Randolph, always suspicious, assumed that Dudley and the council manipulated George for nefarious reasons, but the evidence strongly suggests that George bullied Dudley and the council. Randolph found it difficult to believe that George, an Englishman and Anglican, would collaborate with backward, Puritan Bostonians. George, however, acted alone and shared the profits of seizing vessels in Boston Harbor among his officers and crew, cementing their loyalty and minimizing discontent. Like so many historians past and present, Randolph failed to consider George, his crew, and the *Rose* as a political, economic, and cultural force in their own right.⁵

The conflict escalated in early July 1686 when the *Rose*'s coxswain refused to let Randolph speak to one of his customs deputies after searching a recently arrived vessel. George had undoubtedly ordered him to keep the information from Randolph while he sent sailors to search the ship and claim informer status. Randolph taunted the coxswain, calling him "a sawcy fellow" and declaring he "deserved to be laid by the heels." Soon George arrived at Randolph's house and verbally "abused" him "beyond expression." George did not take lightly threats to his loyal men and of course a seafarer was expert in the art of insults. Randolph became the target of an entire crew's wrath and they did not spare those close to him. Perhaps at George's behest, Unton Deering,⁶ a third son of an affluent nobleman, had the crew spread rumors that

⁵ Edward Randolph to John Sansom, June 30, 1689, in Robert Toppan, ed., *Edward Randolph: Including His Letters and Official Papers from the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies in America*, 7 vols. (Boston, 1898), 6: 183-184.

⁶ Unton Deering was a volunteer officer on board and came from a fairly affluent family in England. His name is often spelled Deering or Dearing but I have also seen it as Derring and Dering. I have chosen for the purpose of consistency to use "Deering" except when used in quotations.

Randolph's wife had been a prostitute on the Nottingham Estate back in England. Randolph angrily wrote Deering's powerful relative by marriage, Sir Robert Southwell, in the hopes of quelling the sailor's scandalous accusations. He failed, and instead these rumors eventually drove Mrs. Randolph to flee back to England, leaving behind a sad and embittered husband. Captain George likely hoped Randolph would join his partner, leaving him as the sole authority to condemn vessels involved in illicit trade.⁷

George kept the *Rose* stationed "within 2 cables length of Boston" for most the summer and fall to continue his lucrative undertaking. By mid-July, George lost his competition, as Randolph reluctantly departed Boston for Rhode Island and Connecticut to obtain their cooperation in annulling their charters and joining the Dominion of New England. During Randolph's sixteen day absence, George cunningly shirked his real duties by ordering Lieutenant Condon to fit out a brigantine to search the coast for reported pirates. His search and seize operation flourished and he obtained over £200 before Randolph's return.⁸ By the end of the month, even Dudley desperately wished to detach the parasitic Captain George and the costly H.M.S. *Rose* from Boston. In a pointed letter to William Blathwayt, Secretary of Trade and Foreign Plantations, he remarked, "I should be very Glad of particular Orders for her [the *Rose*'s] Disposall or returne if her service here be not judged worth the Expençe."⁹ If Dudley greatly profited from his relationship with George, as Randolph alleged, the president would not

⁷ Edward Randolph to Sir Robert Southwell, 10 July 1686, *Randolph Letters*, 4: 92-93. For Deering-Southwell connection see, Francis Haslewood, *Genealogical Memoranda Relating to the Family of Dering of Surrenden-Dering, in the Parish of Pluckley, Kent* (London, 1876), pp. 17-18; Randolph's wife returned to London in August of 1687 see, Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, 5 August 1687, *Randolph Letters*, 6: 225.

⁸ Randolph returned to Boston in a foul mood and he sent three letters to prominent officials regarding George's conduct. In one letter, he informed the future governor, Edmund Andros, that Connecticut and Rhode Island cared little about the dissolution of their charters. Rather, the two colonies complained heartily over Captain George's harassment of their shipping in Boston, see, Edward Randolph to Sir Edmund Andros, 28 July 1686, *Randolph Letters*, 6: 190-93; Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, July 28, 1686, and Edward Randolph to Dr. William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, August 2, 1686, *Edward Randolph*, 4: 97-100 and 103-110.

⁹ Joseph Dudley to William Blathwayt, July 31, 1686, *Edward Randolph*, 4: 195-196.

have been so anxious to see the *Rose* sail away. The arrival of the H.M.S. *Dartmouth*, commanded by the belligerent Captain George St. Loe, from the West Indies in late August only furthered Dudley's desire to get rid of George.¹⁰

Authorities feared the Royal Navy crews now loitering about Boston. English sailors had a reputation for frolicking, blasphemous, and riotous behavior that did not sit well with Puritan ministers. For instance, in September 1686, Captain St. Loe petitioned the council to allow him and his crew to have a bonfire in Boston to celebrate the Queen's birthday. They denied his request, expressing concern that the fire would incite a riot and possibly burn down the town. Sailors from the *Dartmouth* and *Rose*, however, refused to forgo a chance to celebrate and held their bonfire on Noddles Island,¹¹ now East Boston. To the chagrin of the council and town ministers, a number of revelers from Boston attended the party as well. The firing of guns and loud "hussas" went well past midnight and into the early morning of Sunday. Religious leaders trumpeted their displeasure at the profanation of the Sabbath. After Boston's 1689 revolution, one minister reminisced, "her [the *Rose*'s] men playing Reakes on shoar to the Great offence and disturbance of the inhabitants."¹²

The influx of English outsiders only increased when Governor Edmund Andros arrived on December 20, 1686 with two regiments of English soldiers and roughly 200 more Royal Navy

¹⁰ On 5 August, George did finally depart Boston in the *Rose* to search for the pirates infesting the coast. For 15 days the *Rose* meandered along the coast never going far from Boston harbor. On 20 August, he returned to Nantasket Road in Boston Harbor. Undoubtedly he had learned of the *Dartmouth* frigate's approach to Boston. He once again decided to fit out a different ship, place Lieutenant Condon in charge, and have him search for the pirates. George stayed in Boston to attend to his affairs and maintain the power he had established since his arrival in May, see, Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, August 1686, ADM 51/3955, TNA and Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, August 23 1686, *Edward Randolph*, 6: 198-99.

¹¹ Today referred to as Noddles Island.

¹² Another bonfire party was held by the seafarers on 14 October 1686 for the King's birthday. Robert N. Toppan, ed., "Records of the Council of Massachusetts under Joseph Dudley," Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, 2d Ser., XIII (1899- 1900), 270-71; Sewall, *Diary*, 1:122-124; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, September 25 and October 14, 1686, ADM 51/3955, TNA; Increase Mather, *A Vindication of New England from the vile aspersions cast upon that country* in *The Andros Tracts*, ed. W. H. Whitmore, 3 vols. (Boston, 1868-74), 2: 54.

sailors on board the fourth-rate H.M.S. *Kingfisher*. The profound multiplication of Anglicans and seafarers led to more “profane” change in Boston. Under Dudley, Anglicans had received little relief from a hostile populace. Puritan ministers attacked their practices and beliefs. They hindered Boston’s Anglican minister, Robert Ratcliff, from forming a church, compelling him to preach in the cramped town-house. Upon arrival, Andros asked Increase Mather and Samuel Willard if they might allow Ratcliff the use of their churches but they adamantly refused. Andros initially accepted their response; however, after attending one of Ratcliff’s sermons in the town-house, he forced Willard to open the doors of South Church to the Anglicans.¹³ Puritan churchgoers also found the redcoats’ noisy musket volleys during their sermons offensive. Andros further angered Massachusetts Bay colonists by vacating the lands granted to them under the old company charter, initiating a process whereby the colonists had to pay a fee to reapply for their lands. For Bostonians, these acts constituted the most blatant attack yet on their economic and religious rights.¹⁴

On April 30, 1687 the *Kingfisher* docked in Charlestown for repairs. Soon after the town became a hotbed of what Puritans denounced as Anglican, “papist,” and pagan vices. In May, townsfolk, perhaps with the help of the *Kingfisher*’s sailors, erected a maypole to play music and dance around. The maypole shocked stalwart Puritans. As Increase Mather exclaimed of maypoles in 1686, “It is an abominable shame, that any Persons in a Land of such Light and Purity as New England has been, should have to Face to speak to think of practising so vile a piece of Heathenism.” Many in Charlestown agreed with Mather and the town constables

¹³ This uncomfortable situation lasted until Spring 1688 when King’s Chapel opened its door as the first Anglican Church in Boston see, Viola Barnes, *The Dominion of New England: A Study in British Colonial Policy* (1923: reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1960), 127-130.

¹⁴ For general disturbances caused by the increased Anglican presence, see, Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 133-138 and Increase Mather, *Testimony Against Several Prophane and Superstitious Customs* (London, 1687). For taxation and land grants, see, Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, pp. 74-83.

chopped the maypole down after Samuel Phips, a selectman, recommended the action. Within the week, however, a few mischief-makers challenged Puritan orthodoxy and patience by raising a larger maypole with a “Garland upon it.” Andros used his authority to silence the Puritan ministers who attempted to critique the culture emanating from the sea, his soldiers, and Anglican beliefs.¹⁵ The maritime and Anglican presence in Charlestown instigated another clash of cultures that May. Joseph Phips, the brother of Samuel Phips and a Puritan, attended an Anglican funeral and kept his hat on during the parson’s sermon. This common practice among Puritans greatly offended the new captain of the *Kingfisher*, John Grimsditch, and a fistfight broke out. Governor Andros blamed Phips for the disorderly conduct and ordered a court date for the proud Puritan. Royal Navy seafarers, as we will see shortly, did not believe Phips or the Puritan community had been punished sufficiently.¹⁶

The *Rose*’s arrival in Boston brought change in its wake. Captain George became an immediate and powerful political and economic figure. He provoked all other authorities with his aggressive money-making schemes, verbal abuse, and veiled threats of violence. Meanwhile, the crews of *Rose* and other naval vessels left a lasting cultural impression, as they forcefully subjected the predominantly Puritan community to maritime, Anglican, and plebeian traditions. Governor Andros supported their efforts, using his authority to help break down religious and

¹⁵ Some historians have asserted that sailors from the *Kingfisher* were responsible for the maypole, see, Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *The Puritan Oligarchy: The Founding of American Civilization* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1947), 163 and Philip Ranet, *Enemies of the Bay Colony: Puritan Massachusetts and its Foes* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 120. This, however, appears to be a misreading of Samuel Sewall’s diary entry of 26 May 1687, which joins the issue of the maypole with the fistfight between Joseph Phips and Captain John Grimsditch, see, Sewall, *Diary*, 1:140-141. The seafarers undoubtedly participated in the jovialities surrounding the maypole, especially with their ship under repair and little else to do. Increase Mather noted that “Vain Persons” intended to raise a maypole “when the time shall come” in October of 1686, see, Mather, *Testimony Against Several Prophane and Superstitious Customs*, A4-A5. This sermon was censored in Boston by the Andros administration, which explains its London publication in 1687.

¹⁶ Samuel Sewall notes from rumor that Phips attended a soldier’s sermon on Wednesday May 18, 1687. I suspect Phips attended Captain Thomas Hamilton’s (the *Kingfisher*’s previous captain) funeral on Tuesday May 17, 1687. This would better explain Grimsditch’s extreme actions, Sewall, *Diary*, 1:140.

cultural boundaries. His encouragement, however, may have served to embolden typically marginalized men.

The tumultuous political circumstances in Boston between 1686 and 1689 generated sharp disputes between colonists and the Royal Navy. Royal Navy officers, colonial bureaucrats and ministers, and royal appointees struggled for power. These contests ensnared working-class sailors, customs deputies, and town constables in an increasingly violent environment that tended to undermine the authority of local elites. Royal Navy ship captains encouraged conflict with the locals to consolidate their authority and inspire loyalty among their crews. For George, the intense squabbles had practical applications. They distracted an unpaid crew stationed in a port far from family and friends and with little to keep them busy. George created an “us versus them” mentality that he successfully transferred to other Royal Navy crews passing through Boston. Violent interactions between George’s crew and townsfolk occurred only when other Royal Navy vessels were in port.

George first employed the aid of another Royal Navy ship captain in his feud with locals in late August 1686. Local authorities had stalled George’s lucrative operations in Boston Harbor by favoring Randolph’s claims for the search and seizure of illicit goods.¹⁷ George refused to step aside quietly, and when threatened, he enlisted the aid of Captain George St. Loe of the H.M.S. *Dartmouth*. On October 20, Lieutenant Condon sent a sailor named David Simpson to seize the ketch *Providence* from Newfoundland with explicit orders not to allow Randolph’s deputies on board. Simpson fulfilled his duty admirably. When Randolph’s deputy, John Luggar, arrived to seize the vessel, Simpson picked up an ax and “swore to cut the said Luggar in pieces”

¹⁷ In September 1686, George tried to condemn smuggled goods in Boston and then New York but Randolph thwarted him on both occasions. Randolph, however, still believed the government allied with George against him, see Edward Randolph to Governor of New York Boston, September 20, 1684 [1686], *Edward Randolph*, 4: 125-126.

if he came on board. Another customs deputy, William Hill, made the attempt and received a slash to his face for his efforts. In response to the violence, Randolph solicited the aid of Constable Isaiah Toy in bringing Simpson to prison. The constable and customs deputies managed to apprehend Simpson after a scuffle and more verbal threats. They marched Simpson toward the courthouse, joined along the way by Judge and Councilman Richard Wharton.¹⁸

Naval officers liked to maintain control of disciplining their seamen, and sailors, navy or otherwise, frequently acted to protect fellow crewmates from prison. George also believed he had the King's authority to seize vessels in Boston Harbor and that Simpson had acted in a legal manner. Therefore, when George heard of Simpson's arrest, he enlisted Captain St. Loe's help to free the captured seaman. A gang of naval officers and sailors confronted Randolph, Toy, Wharton, and Simpson on Broad Street. George and St. Loe "without any provocation in a Violent Scurrilous manner," questioned the constable and elites holding Simpson "but had not patience to hear, or receive any Answers but run furiously upon the Constable ... with their staves." In the ensuing scuffle with the constable, two of George's sailors rushed up behind Toy to liberate Simpson. One of the seafarers cried out "my Capt. is my life," illustrating the loyalty of George's crew. As the fray took a violent turn, Judge Wharton threatened to "raise the Towne" against George and his allies. St. Loe retorted, "You show what You will be at, You will be ready to raise the Towne against his Majesties Authority." Both sides claimed the King's authority with valid reasons. George and St. Loe halted their attacks, however, as a growing

¹⁸ Depositions of Edward Randolph, John Luggar, Erasmus Stephens, and Isaiah Toy, October 21 and 22, 1686, Massachusetts Archives Collection, 328 vols. (hereafter cited as Mass. Arch.), 127: 120-123 and 127. Randolph's deposition is also published in *Edward Randolph*, 4: 126-128.

crowd of townspeople assembled. Neither captain, however, desired to look weak in front of crewmates and kept up a verbal tirade against the local authorities.¹⁹

The fight to liberate Simpson illuminated power relations between the Royal Navy and local authorities. St. Loe declared to Judge Wharton that “the worst man he had on board, was as good a man as himself [Wharton],” quite the insult for a man who regularly passed judgment on lowly seafaring men. Captain George, stung by months of disagreement, similarly told Randolph that the lowliest of his seamen had more power than Randolph to seize ships in Boston Harbor. He also mocked the interim government calling the council “a Company of pittyfull little fellows.” Both men threatened Randolph, his deputies, and Wharton with violence should they be caught in the harbor or at sea, suggesting that the captains understood that in town their powers were limited but they had full control of the harbor. After Wharton penned a court order for Simpson, St. Loe derisively expressed to the Councilmen that they would be better off delivering Simpson to their own homes and beds “then to Send him to Prison.” This was not an idle threat. Together, the two Royal Navy vessels had close to two hundred men who could create headaches for authorities. This is exactly what St. Loe had in mind. As he departed, St. Loe called for his crew to come ashore.²⁰

The drama between the two ship captains and Boston authorities continued for weeks. The day after the incident, magistrates summoned George and St. Loe to answer for their actions. The captains firmly refused, insisting that the council and therefore the court had no authority over them. If President Dudley, however, had orders for their ships then they would be followed. The court sent four more summons as the day progressed, the last of which included the

¹⁹ Depositions of Richard Wharton and Joseph Webb, October 21 and 22, 1686, Mass. Arch., 127: 124-125 and 126a. Wharton’s deposition is also published in *Edward Randolph*, 6: 202-204.

²⁰ Depositions of Edward Randolph, Michael Perry, Richard Wharton, John Luggar, Erasmus Stephens, Isaiah Toy, Joseph Webb, James Coffin, and Francis Cooke, October 21 and 22 1686, Mass. Arch., 127: 120-130.

president's seal. George and St. Loe ignored them. In a final communication with the captains that day, the court ordered them to keep their sailors on board their vessels past "Candle light." A number of Boston's inhabitants had complained to the court of "severall miscarriages & misdemeanours committed by the said Captaines Men" after the quarrel in the streets. With Simpson in prison, St. Loe had his men keep his promise to Wharton.²¹

Captains George and St. Loe knew that local authorities could not touch them on board their ships at sea. They resisted all court summons except one, to which St. Loe excused himself for his absences and mockingly challenged the court's prerogative. The magistrates were not amused. They sent a letter "to acquaint the said Captaine Saintloe" that his nonattendance broke the law and "therefore that this Court hath not been so wanting to themselves or the due formes of proceedince as he may suddainly imagine." The magistrates adjourned for the day, expecting St. Loe to attend court in five days. On October 23, the *Rose* frigate let loose its cannons in an apparent effort at intimidation. Judge Samuel Sewall recorded the event in his diary: "about 7aclock the Frigot fires many Guns, Drums and Trumpets going. I heard the Guns." George meant to show the magistrates and Boston's inhabitants his potential for mayhem.²² St. Loe, meanwhile, failed to keep his appointment with the magistrates on October 27. But that same day, one of his sailors, Giles Smith, made a grand entrance to court after abusing and swearing "wicked oaths" at another Boston constable, Jabez Neigus. The court fined Smith twenty shillings and returned him to St. Loe for corporal punishment. St. Loe probably "punished"

²¹ "Records of the Council of Massachusetts under Joseph Dudley," 272-274.

²² There does not appear to be a reason for the *Rose* frigates display other than George's conflict with Boston authorities. No ships were entering port and there was no reason for celebration. Condon suspiciously neglected to mention the "salute" in the ship's log as he regularly did on other occasions, see, Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, October 23, 1686, ADM 51/3955, TNA. Sewall, *Diary*, 1:124.

Smith with an extra ration of rum. The tone of the magistrates' decree to Smith expressed exasperation with Captains George and St. Loe.²³

The two Royal Navy commanders considered their power and authority equal to or greater than colonial authorities. In this instance, they had physically attacked a town constable, derided Dudley's councilmen, threatened retribution, and allowed their sailors to harass locals. They refused to attend court summons or respect Boston's laws and alleged their authority came directly from the king. George and St. Loe won this first violent power struggle, which set the stage for further riotous and aggressive actions by Royal Navy crews.

In his *Letters Written from New England* (1686), John Dunton described Boston's sanctimonious attitude towards non-Puritans and foreigners. Dunton wrote to his brother, "I had not given you the Trouble of so large an account of the manners of the Bostonians, nor rak'd in such a Dunghil of Filth, but that this sort of People are so apt to say, Stand off, for I am holier than Thou."²⁴ Sailors, meanwhile, took offense to the superiority of local authorities and at times responded aggressively. This volatile combination reached a boiling point in May 1687 when Samuel Phips offended the *Kingfisher's* new captain and the two Royal Navy crews by wearing his hat during their deceased captain's funeral. Andros's modest punishment of Phips apparently did not satisfy the seafaring men's thirst for revenge, and Captain Grimsditch led "fivetic or sixtie" seafarers from the *Kingfisher* and *Rose* on a rampage through the town. Upon hearing the commotion, Timothy Phillips, a town constable, ran home to obtain his staff to thwart the riot. He met Grimsditch and his crew just outside his house, whereupon he ordered them to disperse. In response, a few sailors disarmed Phillips and then Grimsditch took a swipe at him with a

²³ "Records of the Council of Massachusetts under Joseph Dudley," 275.

²⁴ John Dunton, *Letters from New England, 1686*, (Boston: Prince Society, 1867), 69-74, quote at 74. Ned Ward held similarly unsavory views of Bostonians, see Edward Ward, *A Trip to New England* (1699) in *A Collection of the Writings of Mr. Edward Ward, II*, (London, 1717), 171-178.

drawn rapier. Outmatched, the constable fled into his home but the seafarers followed. They broke down the door, stole several items, and “ransacked” the dwelling, forcing Phillips to abandon his own home. A minor cultural slight had detonated a longer, larger struggle between the Royal Navy and Boston authorities.

Governor Andros called Grimsditch before him on the night of the riot to answer for his actions. Afterwards, the boatswain of the *Kingfisher* told the constable, Timothy Phillips, that “all was well on the Capt. Side.” Phillips and his fellow constables John Chamberlain and Nathaniel Adams, not content with Andros’s leniency, confronted the governor to seek redress for the riot and Grimsditch’s violence. The boatswain had not lied; Grimsditch had turned Andros against the town constables. The governor upbraided the constables and went so far as to threaten them with imprisonment. As the constables left, the governor warned them “look to your Self and have a care for you are marked.”²⁵ Seafarers had little respect for local authority and readily resorted to intimidation and violent behavior. With over 300 seafarers on the *Kingfisher* and *Rose* combined, Andros had no intention of exerting his authority and limited resources for the safety of a few town constables. In fact, he offered a glowing, albeit inaccurate, recommendation of Grimsditch to the Secretary of the Admiralty that led to a promotion: “the captain demeaned himself well and kept the ships company in very good order.” Andros’s complacency, even nominal support, ensured that the Royal Navy seafarers had would take further revenge on the local community.²⁶

Two months later, four of Captain George’s most stalwart friends and colleagues from the *Rose* joined with three fairly prominent Bostonians for a night of drinking, troublemaking,

²⁵ Depositions of Timothy Phillips and John Chamberlin, January 24, 1690 and February 4, 1690, Mass. Arch., 35: 119a and 217.

²⁶ Edmund Andros to Secretary of the Admiralty, September 5, 1687, in *Andros Tracts*, 3: 74-75; Grimsditch was promoted to captain of the *Larke* based on Andros’s recommendation, see, Tanner ed., *Pepys Memoirs*, 92.

and eventually bloodshed. The *Kingfisher* still lay at dock under repair, Andros had effectively undermined local constables, and the *Rose*'s men believed themselves impervious to any repercussions. The night began with drinking. Unton Deering, George's confidant who began the malicious rumors about Randolph's wife, invited the youthful Thomas Richards²⁷ and John Bonamy²⁸ of Boston to share a bottle of punch on board the *Rose*. A little before 8:00, Andrew Belcher (Boston ship captain/merchant),²⁹ John Wiggoner (first mate), Edward Briggs (ship surgeon), and Thomas Cutler (common seaman) joined them. As historian Viola Barnes discovered, Captain George "connived at a certain amount of illicit trade, for which reason the merchants preferred to have him examine their cargoes." With Wiggoner and Captain Belcher, a known smuggler, both in attendance the likely topic of conversation was how to get illicit goods into or out of Boston. The bottle of punch soon expired and the crew relocated to the Three Cranes tavern for more drinking. The night's entertainment turned dangerous when the merry gang left the tavern and Wiggoner, a figure of authority, returned to the *Rose*. After this point, the sequence of events varies depending on the witness. Belcher contends that the seafarers went ahead of the three Bostonians and out of sight. Shortly thereafter they "heard a woman cry out that her child was killed." Belcher, Richards, and Bonamy apparently fled to Belcher's mother's house and innocently fell asleep without reporting the incident. Belcher's deposition is either a

²⁷ Richards was born in 1670 and came from a renowned New England family. His uncle, Major John Richards, owned a large swath of the North End with numerous shops for shipbuilding. He served as Massachusetts agent in London from 1682-1684 and in 1692 participated in the Salem witch trials as a judge. John Richards had no children and therefore passed on all of his Boston waterfront property to Thomas Richards when he died in 1694, see, John Richards Last Will and Testimony, 1 April 1694, in Abner Morse, *A Genealogical Register of the Descendants of Several Ancient Puritans, Volume 3* (Boston, 1861), 9-13.

²⁸ John Bonamy worked for and lived with John West, arguably the most powerful man on Andros's council.

²⁹ In 1687, Andrew Belcher was a wealthy ship captain but he would soon be one of the wealthiest merchants in Boston. He gained much of his wealth from smuggling and trade with pirates. He was the father of Jonathan Belcher who served as Massachusetts's governor from 1730 to 1741. Richards sent a message to Belcher to have him join them on the *Rose*, see, Depositions of Andrew Belcher and John Bonamy, July 20, 1687, MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126.

damning self-indictment of his illegal dealings with the men of the *Rose* frigate that he did not want authorities to discover or a testament to his immoral character.³⁰

Belcher lied to frame the seafarers and exonerate Thomas Richards. According to Cutler, the young, inebriated Richards wished to impress his seafaring friends and “made an offer to break the window of any house” along their path. Richards, or likely the seafarers for him, targeted the house of Nathaniel Adams, one of the constables who went before Andros to complain about the riot in May. As Andros had warned, the seafarers had “marked” the town constables for abuse. Richards’s rock smashed through the window, landing in the cradle of Adams’s baby. Nathaniel’s wife, Hannah, ran outside screaming “some rogue had killed her child.” She witnessed three men running away, including Cutler, who swiftly returned to his ship. Deering, however, drew his rapier and approached Adams. Her husband ran out of the house towards Deering, who stabbed the defenseless constable. In a rather cowardly action, Nathaniel Adams fled, leaving his wife and child behind. Hannah bravely grabbed a piece of wood and knocked Deering to the ground before running back inside.³¹

The commotion dangerously drew more people into the streets to face the enraged Deering and the remaining gang. Luke Perkins, a concerned citizen, arrived at the request of the wounded Adams to find a small group of men milling about Adams’s wharf. Perkins questioned the crew’s intent calling to them, “what do you mean to kill all you meet?” One of the men taunted Perkins, threatening to do just that. Perkins wisely departed to seek out Constable John

³⁰ Barnes, *The Dominion of New England*, 66. Belcher’s deposition is the most unreliable, as no one corroborates his story. Bonamy even admits Richards was not with them when they arrived at Belcher’s mother’s house; rather “he came immediately” after them. Both Bonamy and Belcher seem to be covering for their young friend, see, Depositions of Andrew Belcher and John Bonamy, July 20, 1687, MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126.

³¹ Depositions of James Cutler, Hannah Adams, and John Wilmont, July 20, 1687, MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126; Sewall, *Diary*, 1:144.

Chamberlain and additional aid. Cordwainer Samuel Hunting, meanwhile, had been awakened by the cries and ran down the waterfront to Adams's wharf where he found "a parcel of men at the ferryway." He tried to engage the men in conversation but they attacked. George Exter, a ferryman, "saw Mr. Deering and Doctor Briggs run at Capt. Hunting with drawn swords" intent on harming the cordwainer. He also observed that "Thomas Richards was there" but the ferryman "did not see him strike." Hunting's neighbor, William Jamison, arrived to witness the end of the violent scene. Doctor Briggs, perhaps finally realizing the seriousness of his situation, ceased his attack and offered to heal Hunting's wounds. Briggs and Jamison aided Hunting to his home where Briggs dressed his wounds; however, Hunting had Jamison fetch Justice Greaves to arrest the ship's surgeon.³²

The night's drama ended when Luke Perkins returned to the ferry with Constable John Chamberlain and reinforcements. Chamberlain declared the King's Peace "whereupon one called Mr. Deering Swore God Damn" and attacked yet again, wounding Perkins. Chamberlain also received thrusts from Deering's rapier but blocked them with his staff and knocked Deering to the ground. He apprehended Deering and brought him before Justice Greaves. The seafarer railed against his incarceration; he cursed the judge and declared he "would have killed two or three." Briggs also had hard feelings regarding his imprisonment and swore to a fellow prisoner, Thomas Clarke, that if "he saw Mr. John Cutler³³ of Charlestown he would Run him through with his sword." When charged with the crime, Briggs desperately claimed Richards was the culprit who attacked Hunting. But all other testimonies, including Hunting's, accuse Deering and

³² Depositions of Luke Perkins, Samuel Hunting, George Exter, William Jamison, and Edward Briggs, July 20, 1687, MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126. Briggs stated in his deposition that he arrived at the scene to find Thomas Richards striking Samuel Hunting with his cane. I am inclined to believe the account of the ferryman since he was not involved in the affray nor charged with a crime.

³³ It seems likely that Cutler, a Charlestown anchorsmith, had some role in ensuring Briggs made it to prison the night of 19 July. Briggs's statement underscores the personal connections and animosities that developed between seafarers on the *Rose* and townsfolk in Boston and Charlestown.

Briggs for the violent attacks. The two men spent fifty-three days in prison awaiting a court date. It came on September 6, 1687, four days before the *Rose* set sail to cruise the coast. The jury released Deering and Briggs to the frigate after obtaining the costs of their confinement and court fees. The two officers would not forget their imprisonment by the people of the Massachusetts Bay colony.³⁴

The confluence of seafaring culture, retribution, alcohol, and youth produced the night of July 19, 1687. Seafarers learned from their officers to challenge local and Puritan authority, disrespect constables, and claim the King's Peace as their own prerogative. They saw Boston and Charlestown as lawless playgrounds where riots and violence could be committed without repercussions. Alcohol made them brave, stupid, and dangerous. The seventeen-year-old Richards became a pawn in the battle between the Royal Navy and the town constables when he threw the rock into Constable Adams's house. Deering purposefully escalated the night's entertainment into a riot by attacking Nathaniel Adams, his wife, and everyone else who crossed his path. The masculine maritime world Deering lived and worked in emphasized strength, daring, and showmanship. Deering's night of foolish bravery, bloodshed, and imprisonment added to his fearsome reputation among the crew and even elevated his already high status in the eyes of Captain George. The "terror and affrightment"³⁵ inflicted upon the inhabitants of Charlestown and Boston by the officers and seamen of the H.M.S. *Rose*, *Dartmouth*, and *Kingfisher*, represented the conscious breakdown of local authority by Captain George, who wished to profit from the chaos. For Bostonians, witnessing young men like Richards imitate

³⁴ For details of Chamberlain's engagement with Deering, see, Depositions of John Chamberlain, Luke Perkins, and Nicholas Lobdin, July 20, 1687, MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126 and Deposition of John Chamberlain, February 4, 1690, Mass. Arch., 35: 217. For Deering's release, see, MSS. Middlesex County General Sessions, 1686-1698, 21. The charges against Edwards are in MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126 but no verdict was given. I assume he was released with Deering, as he served aboard the *Rose* before the Revolution of 1689; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, September 10, 1687, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

³⁵ MSS. Middlesex County Court, 1684-1693, Folio 126.

seafarers and seek their approval through mischief intensified the “terror” felt by the religious community.³⁶ Furthermore, the lack of punishment for the crimes committed was a constant reminder to the people of Massachusetts that the Charter laws of their forefathers could no longer be enforced. The growing discontent among the populace towards the Andros administration and Captain John George had important ramifications when William of Orange seized the throne of England in December of 1688.

Historians have long debated the origins of the revolution that occurred in Boston on 18 April 1689. Some have considered it a spontaneous uprising of the masses. Others have claimed Boston elites plotted the revolution in advance. The latter historians have also falsely sensationalized the character of Robert Small, the *Rose*’s carpenter, who seized Captain George and thereby incited Boston’s revolution.³⁷ They have called him “the notorious carpenter” and “the fanatical Protestant petty officer.” In truth, we do not know Small’s religious affiliation and it seems highly unlikely he, like most seafaring men, was “fanatical.” His compatriot and the overall leader of the mutiny, Jarvis Coppindale, the *Rose*’s navigator and mathematician, however, expressed strong support for the Protestant King William III. Historians have utterly

³⁶ The riot of July 19 resonated with Samuel Sewall who noted five months later, “This day, or Monday, was buried one Mr. Lock [Ben Lock of the *Rose*] in Capt. Hamilton’s Tomb. It’s thought he kill’d himself with Drink. Was in the Riot that Capt. Hunting was wounded in at Charlestown, as is said.” Ben Lock had nothing to do with the riot in Charlestown but Sewall tied the *Rose* frigate and all its men to that event. For the record of Lock’s death in the *Rose*’s ship log, see, Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, December 19 and 21, 1687, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

³⁷ My account of the revolution closely follows that told by Richard Johnson in *Adjustment to Empire*, 88-96. Unfortunately, few historians have adopted the inconvenient truth that Boston elites had little to do with planning the uprising. For instance, Owen Stanwood creates an inaccurate chronology for events so as to ignore the seafarers’ role. He places George’s capture at ten o’ clock, after a crowd and militia had formed. Even John Riggs, Stanwood’s “most reliable first-person account” does not support his chronology of events. In fact, no first-person account supports his chronology see, Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 102 and 240-241n35. The vast majority of historians, at least, place George’s capture prior to the formation of a mob and the militia’s call, see, Barnes, *The Dominion of New England*, 242; David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 240; Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, 90; J.M. Sosin, *English America and the Revolution of 1688: Royal Administration and the Structure of Provincial Government* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 92; Ricahrd S. Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company INC., 1962), 254; Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 69-70.

neglected Coppindale, leading to significant errors in interpretation of events on board the *Rose* and Boston's 1689 revolution. They have instead relied solely on the word of that beacon of good manners and credibility, Captain John George and his gang of criminal compatriots like Unton Deering and Edward Briggs, all the while ignoring the overwhelming evidence from the rest of the crew and the Council of Safety.³⁸

After the release of Deering and Briggs from prison, the number of Royal Navy seafarers in Boston radically declined when the *Kingfisher* departed for London on 8 September 1687 and the *Rose* sailed for Cape Sables on 10 September 1687. Boston, however, remained the *Rose*'s primary station even though the vessel had been slated to return to England in May of 1687. The ship required major repairs during the spring and summer of 1687. When it was finally ready to sail for England, news arrived that the French had seized two Massachusetts fishing vessels returning from Newfoundland, prompting Andros to retain the ship. As a result, the *Rose*'s "disgruntled" crew had to persist indefinitely in a wretched colonial setting without pay.³⁹

In 1688, Andros finally put Captain George and the *Rose* frigate to work. For 186 days the *Rose* either cruised the coast or monitored shipping in Nantasket Road just outside Boston Harbor.⁴⁰ The crew finally experienced some excitement beyond drinking, rioting, and

³⁸ For Small quotes see, Guy Howard Miller, "Rebellion in Zion: The Overthrow of the Dominion of New England," *Historian* 30 (1968): 439-459, quote at 451 and Webb, *Lord Churchill's Coup*, p. 188. For like-minded studies see, John Gorham Palfrey, *History of New England During the Stuart Dynasty, Volume 3* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1870); Barnes, *The Dominion of New England*; Theodore Lewis, "Massachusetts and the Glorious Revolution" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1967); G.B. Warden, *Boston: 1689-1776* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970); Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America*; Ian K. Steele, "Origins of Boston's Revolutionary Declaration of 18 April 1689" *The New England Quarterly* 62:1 (March, 1989): 75-81, quote at 8; Sosin, *English America and the Revolution of 1688*; Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic 1675-1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed*.

³⁹ Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, August 5, 1687, *Edward Randolph*, 4: 226; Edmund Andros to Secretary of the Admiralty, September 5, 1687, in *Andros Tracts*, 3: 74-75.

⁴⁰ After arriving in Boston in 1686 the *Rose* spent only 15 days at sea. In 1687 the *Rose* spent 68 days at sea. 1688 was the only year the seafarers on the *Rose* spent more time at sea than in port, see, Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

tormenting local authorities in Boston and Charlestown. On May 14 the seafarers of the *Rose* ransacked a trading post of the Frenchman Jean-Vincent D' Abbadie de Saint-Castin at Penobscot Bay with Governor Andros's permission. Saint-Castin, who had a number of Abenaki wives, responded by encouraging his Indian allies to attack English frontier settlements in Maine. George and his seafarers had precipitated a war.⁴¹ By the time the *Rose* returned to Boston in October, the conflict with the Abenaki Indians in Maine had intensified and spread. Press gangs prowled the streets, seizing men to serve on the frontier to the great displeasure of the inhabitants. As Owen Stanwood has argued, Bostonians saw the conflict with the Abenaki as part of a papist plot to destroy them – a plot that Andros appeared to be supporting by first ignoring the problem and then impressing their men and thereby weakening the city's defenses. Puritan ministers supported this view and lent trustworthy voices to the rising fear.⁴²

As New England grappled with the Abenaki and imagined papist threats, Whig elites in England worked to rid themselves of a very real papist king by inviting William of Orange to invade England. On November 1, 1688, William's fleet, commanded by the defector Admiral Arthur Herbert, set sail for England. The English Navy, commanded by Lord Dartmouth, attempted to intercept the prince but easterly winds kept it from proceeding from the Gunfleet near Medway. No evidence exists to suggest widespread disloyalty to James II in the English navy during this early stage. William successfully landed his army at Torbay and ordered the

⁴¹ According to Randolph, George "roade with his frigott before Casteen's door" and sent Lieutenant Condon to speak with the man. Soon after, Saint-Castin fled from the trading post, leaving George and his men free to loot the place when Governor Andros arrived. If Saint-Castin did not claim the goods in Pemaquid, George could condemn them. Randolph does not seem to agree with the decision, noting that St. Castin "does not well like to be under the French Government, [he] desires to live indifferent." In October 1688, Randolph expressed his belief that Saint-Castin was behind the Abenaki aggressions and supported them with guns, powder, and shot. Edward Randolph to John Povey, June 21, 1688, *Edward Randolph*, 4: 224-225; Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, October 16, 1688, *Edward Randolph*, 4: 272-273; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, May 15, 1688, ADM 51/3955, TNA; Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, 85-86; Barnes, *The Dominion of New England*, 222-223.

⁴² In September of 1688 alone, 54 men were taken from Boston and Charlestown see, Sewall, *Diary*, 1:176-178; Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed*, 74-81.

march for London. After a few small defeats, James II lost his nerve on December 10 and fled to France with his wife. He briefly returned a week later but William bullied him into flight again.⁴³

Loyalty to James remained strong among some naval officers and seamen, who facilitated his escape to France. Captain Trevanion of the *Harwich* and Captain Macdonnel of the *Assurance* manned the small fishing vessel that brought James across the English Channel. They continued to serve James and commanded French ships in the invasion of Ireland in 1689. Captain Wilford of the small fireship *Eagle* allowed James to hide on board his ship before proceeding on to France. He could do so because Wilford was “an honest and loyal Officer, and could govern his men who had been so many years with him.” The same could not be said of Travanion’s large crew. The king had first requested to board the *Harwich* but the captain replied “he (*could*) answer for the fidelity of his Officers” but “he was not able to do it for the common Seamen.” Trevanion and Wilford had tested the waters among their officers and seamen to judge whether James could safely board their ships. The same process of testing the crew’s loyalty undoubtedly occurred on all Royal Navy vessels, as officers evaluated the impact of William’s ascension.⁴⁴

Rumors of William’s landing at Torbay began arriving in Boston by February of 1689 just as the *Rose* initiated preparations for the sailing season. When the tide allowed, the ship hauled off the dock on March 10, 1689. By then, concrete, if not reliable, knowledge of events in England had arrived in Boston. Jarvis Coppindale noted, “Thomas Curtis came to my cabin before we haul’d out of the Dock and Told me that the Prince of Orange was Landid and that the King was fled into France.” Shortly thereafter, the *Rose* frigate became a veritable hotbed of

⁴³ Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, 136-140.

⁴⁴ J.S. Clarke, *The Life of James the Second: King of England*, 2 vols. (London, 1816) 2:276-277; Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, 143. There was a great deal of worry after the Glorious Revolution that seafarers would desert the Royal Navy and join “Foreign Princes and States,” see, *London Gazette*, 6 May 1689.

rumors, plots, and actions. The rumors emanating down from the captain's cabin to the rank and file suggested Captain George intended for the *Rose* to join King James II in France.⁴⁵

The officers and crew reacted with excitement, anxiety, and fear. Like Travanion and Wilford in England, George knew he needed the crew's support to sail for France. Samuel Orders, his loyal barber, set out to discuss the option with the crew. George found mostly resistance to the scheme as had naval officers in England. When Orders approached Jarvis Coppindale with this plot, the officer told him, "The Capt. was but one man, and that he should first know the shipes companies minds for he could not goe alone." When Orders questioned Coppindale's reasons for not supporting George, he replied, "I did not speak for myself, but the Shipes company, I told him if we went for France we should be Proclaimed Rebels to our Country, and loose oure wages." The crew would collect three years of outstanding wages when they returned in London. Seamen had mutinied for far less. Orders tried to allay their fears by claiming George intended to offset their wages by capturing English and Dutch ships prior to leaving for France. Always the opportunist, George knew from experience the wealth from prize ships far exceeded his and the crew's wages. He underestimated, however, the crew's, and especially Coppindale's, unwillingness to take the risk or abandon their homeland.⁴⁶

A cadre of officers and seamen aboard the *Rose* supported George's plan, especially if it allowed them to ransack Boston. Besides Samuel Orders, some of the most vocal advocates for George's scheme were none other than Unton Deering, Edward Briggs, John Wiggoner, and James Cutler. Wiggoner expressed his approval of going to France to Thomas Pope. Isaiah

⁴⁵ Historians have long wondered when verifiable news of the Glorious Revolution arrived in Boston. Coppindale's deposition suggests that even lower officers on the *Rose* knew fairly early. Log of the H.M.S. *Rose* frigate, March 10, 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA; Deposition of Jarvis Coppindale, May 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 11. Note: The few historians who have used the seafarers' depositions have opted not to give their names and therefore they remained anonymous. Given the nature of this study, I feel it is appropriate to allow the seafarers to speak for themselves.

⁴⁶ Deposition of Jarvis Coppindale and William Dickey, May 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 11.

Shorting, meanwhile, overheard the purser “say to Unton Dearing, Jack (a by word much used amongst that gang⁴⁷) I hope to have one engagement with these dogs before we goe by God we will make the slats fly bravely from that Meeting House, Dearing replied that he hoped to have a whole string full of silver tankards.” Doctor Briggs remembering his time in prison, chimed in “that by his maker he would plague some of them Rogues and Whores for their old Kindnesses towards him.” Deering and Briggs did Captain George a great disservice by bringing their own personal grudges to the table. Samuel Orders never suggested the *Rose* intended an attack on the port. Deering and Brigg’s rants, however, created a hothouse for rumors on board the *Rose* – rumors that if spread to Boston could incite a riot.⁴⁸

As stories circulated among the tightly packed crew, the *Rose* continued to prepare for its forthcoming, mysterious voyage. Every winter the *Rose* unloaded ballast, rigging, ship stores, cannons, and sails in order to dock in Boston or Charlestown. Come spring, the crew had to reload all those items. After hauling off the dock, the process of reloading, repairing, tarring, and provisioning the ship generally took a month. The clock was ticking for the seafarers against a voyage to France: on March 16, the crew loaded the ballast; on March 19, the rigging came aboard; on March 20, the seafarers positioned the ship’s guns. For Robert Small, a ship carpenter, and four others, the tension became overwhelming when they discovered on March 28 that “Capt. George had a Grant for his sails” from the governor. The five men quietly deserted the ship and joined Boston’s waterfront community. Jarvis Coppindale, meanwhile, remained on board the ship to enlist the aid of the remainder of the crew. On the morning of March 29, the

⁴⁷ Shorting’s inclusion of this aside suggests deep fractures among *Rose* frigate’s crew with Deering’s “gang” favoring George and the rest of the crew supportive of a return to England and their wages.

⁴⁸ Deposition of Isaiah Shorting, May 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 12.

captain received his sails and bent them – the ship could now sail. It still required, however, further gunpowder, wood, food, beer, and water before it could safely depart.⁴⁹

On April 4, 1689, John Winslow brought reliable evidence of William's ascension by way of Nevis. Andros unwisely attempted to suppress the news by tossing Winslow in jail for sedition. Unfortunately for him, the man had already given Boston's printers the necessary documents to stimulate the robust spread of information.⁵⁰ The news did not alter plans on board the *Rose*. If anything, Andros's actions may have given George further confidence in his decision. Small and his compatriots may have actively worked against him by spreading the rumors they had heard on board the *Rose*. Besides the previously mentioned rumors, the seafarers accused Lieutenant Condon of being Catholic and part of a Papist plot to bring Boston down.⁵¹ Further uncertainty spread among Boston's inhabitants when they learned that impressed soldiers, desiring their unpaid wages, had deserted the frontier and marched on Boston. The soldiers' mutiny prompted Boston's elites, including Cotton Mather, to take precautions. Samuel Mather wrote after his father's death,

⁴⁹ Because historians have overlooked the role of the seafarers in precipitating the revolution, they failed to recognize the straightforward chronology leading to Small's desertion and eventual instigation of the revolution. Log of the H.M.S. *Rose* frigate, March 10, 1689, ADM 51/3955; Deposition of Robert Small, William Rouse, William Mims, John Sholls, and John Wister, April 29, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 4.

⁵⁰ Deposition of John Winslow, February 9, 1689, Mass. Arch., 35: 216; Steele, *The English Atlantic*, 104-105. Official notice could have arrived earlier but Increase Mather, who had been in London since 1687 petitioning for the removal of Andros and a renewal of Massachusetts's Charter, convinced William not to send Andros instructions to rule in his name. Mather undoubtedly waited on his son, Cotton Mather, to gather evidences of Andros's mismanagement of the Dominion of New England to force William's hand in removing the governor from power, see, Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), chap. 7 and Sosin, *English America and the Revolution of 1688*, 83.

⁵¹ Lieutenant Condon was almost certainly Catholic but, like Captain George, it is unlikely he had any designs on Boston. For the seafarers of the *Rose*, the threat of losing wages and access to home probably far outweighed the threat of a papist plot; however, if they desired to rile up Bostonians they picked a very believable threat, see, Deposition of John Sladd, William Ford, and Samuel Mixture, May 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 12 and *Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys*, June 12, 1689, in Charles M. Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690* (Charles Scribner's sons, 1915), 216; For more details on the influence of the Papists plots on Boston's revolution, see, Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed*, chap. 3 and Sosin, *English America and the Revolution of 1688*, 89-91.

the principal Gentlemen in Boston met with Mr. Mather to consult what was best to be done, and they all agreed, if possible, that they would extinguish all Essays in our people to an Insurrection; but if the Country People to the Northward by any violent Motions push'd on the Matter so far as to make a Revolution unavoidable, Then to prevent the Shedding of Blood by an ungoverned Multitude.

Boston elites thus met on April 17, 1689 not to plan a revolution but rather to discuss the suppression of mutineers in order to protect Andros and his council.⁵²

Events on the *Rose* outpaced the mutineers and caught Boston's elites by surprise. On April 12, the seafarers loaded a last barrel of beef and eight barrels of pork onto the *Rose*. Fully provisioned, the ship only "waited on Sr. Edmund Andros."⁵³ Then on the morning of April 18 between eight or nine o'clock, Captain George with John Wiggoner set out from the *Rose* for Boston's North End to meet with the governor and inform him that the ship was ready to sail. Jarvis Coppindale likely sent advanced word to Robert Small of George's intent to go ashore on the eighteenth because Small and his fellow deserters awaited the captain and Wiggoner as soon as they stepped ashore.⁵⁴ Small's intent was to keep the *Rose* from departing for its unknown

⁵² Samuel Mather, *The life of the very Reverend and learned Cotton Mather* (Boston, 1729); Cotton Mather made similar claims in Cotton Mather, *Pietas in Patriam: The Life of His Excellency Sir William Phips* (London, 1697), 52; Barnes, *The Dominion of New England*, 241-242. Finally, an account much closer to the revolution states the "Gentlemen in Boston" would "endeavor to prevent what ill effects an *Unform'd Tumult* might produce," see, *An Account of the Late Revolutions in New-England: In a Letter*, June 6, 1689, *Andros Tracts* 2: 195.

⁵³ Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, April 13, 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA; Extract of a Letter from Bristoll in New England unto Mr. Mather and Others, April 29, 1689, CO 5/855/2, TNA. This assertion raises some interesting questions regarding Andros's intentions. He had tried to keep news of the revolution hidden and now it appears he intended to sail with the *Rose*. Where he intended to sail is, of course, a mystery; however, one little used anonymous account recounted, "the *Rose* Frigate now in our Harbour was intended to carry off our Late Governour for France, & to take any of our English Vessels that might be coming in unto us," see, *An Account of the Late Revolutions in New-England: In a Letter*, June 6, 1689, *Andros Tracts* 2: 194-195. This account was written over a month after the seafarers gave their depositions and the author may have been privy to them. He accurately notes George's plan to seize ships to pay the crews' wages.

⁵⁴ Jarvis Coppindale, the ship's navigator, would have been privy to George's sailing plans and probably sent word to Small. After George reclaimed the ship with the council's consent, he immediately imprisoned Coppindale "as one who chiefly opposed his designs." I shall return to Coppindale further in the text, see, Petition of Jarvis Coppindale, CO 5/855/66, TNA. Besides Captain George's self-serving letter to Samuel Pepys, the wording of which seeks to deflect blame for the insurrection onto the people of Boston and not solely onto his own shoulders, there is no evidence that any person from Boston was involved at this early stage. If Bostonians had truly intended the overthrow of Andros government on April 18, 1689, seizing the captain of the *Rose*, while important, would not have been first on their to-do list. Now, seafarers, who faced the loss of three years' worth of wages and the

destination. The act, however, created pandemonium in a town already on edge. Soon thereafter a riot erupted among the residents of North End. Samuel Prince, a New England ship captain then in Boston, recounted at length,

I knew not any thing of what was intended, till it was begun; yet being at the north end of town, where I saw boys run along the street with clubs in their hands, encouraging one another to fight, I began to mistrust what was intended; and, hasting towards the town-dock, I soon saw men running for their arms: but, ere I got to the Red Lion, I was told that Captain George and the master of the frigate was seized.⁵⁵

With the Boston-based waterfront mob escalating, attentions turned to hated and threatening government officials. Edward Randolph, “was seized upon and hurried to the common Goale by a Company of Ship Carpenters, Ship Chandlers and others whose Livelyhood depended upon the Sea,” whereupon the mob freed Robert Glanville and seven other pirates/privateers from jail.⁵⁶ Even as the mob seized important Andros officials, Boston elites met to implement their plan to provide leadership and protect the lives of their fellow elites. By noon, and probably earlier, leadership of the mob had transferred to officers of the Boston militia, which met at the Town-House to hear a declaration⁵⁷ produced and agreed upon by Boston elites like Cotton Mather, Simon Bradstreet, William Stoughton, Thomas Danforth, and

abandonment of their native country, had an excellent motive for seizing George to keep him from sailing, see, *Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys*, June 12, 1689, in Andrews, *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 216.

⁵⁵ Letter of Samuel Prince, April 22, 1689 in Andrews, *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 186.

⁵⁶ Randolph had hoped to receive a big payoff from seizing these privateers and their goods. He was quite upset at their release, see, Mr. Randolph's Account of irregular Trade in New England since the Revolution, *Edward Randolph*, 5: 36-37.

⁵⁷ There is much historical conjecture regarding the creation of the Declaration of April 18, 1689. Ian Steele and J.M. Sosin argue that the Declaration of April 18, 1689, which detailed the grievances of the Massachusetts Bay Colony against Andros and his government, is proof that Boston's elites plotted and enacted the revolution because it could not have been written immediately. It is likely that the majority of the document was not written on 18 April 1689, however, as Johnson argues, it could easily have been created to support Increase Mather's efforts in London to remove Andros. Despite the lack of evidence, Steele contends, “Boston's declaration was a carefully crafted, deliberately derivative, instrument in a well-prepared coup that toppled the Dominion of New England.” Steele, of course, has no opinion regarding the seafarers of the *Rose* frigate, see, Steele, “Origins of Boston's Revolutionary Declaration of 18 April 1689,” 81 and Sosin, *English America and the Revolution of 1688*, 93. Many historians attribute the document to Cotton Mather. Therefore Steele and Sosin also argued that Cotton Mather destroyed his letters and diary entries during the period of the revolution because of incriminating material, see, Steele, *The English Atlantic*, 104. Historians do not know when or why Mather destroyed those diary entries and letters so any conclusions drawn from the act is mere speculation.

Thomas Richard's uncle, John Richards. They had made the fateful decision to join with the insurrection against Andros's government thereby absolving Jarvis Coppindale, Robert Small, and their fellow supporters of any wrongdoing in challenging their commanding officer. They also took control of events.

From the Town-House, Boston's elites sent Andros, who had bunkered down in Fort Mary, a missive to assure him of their astonishment "with the Peoples sudden taking of Arms; in the first motion whereof we were wholly ignorant." The letter continued by asking Andros to surrender the fort and himself; Boston's elites could thereby promise "all security from violence" – but Andros refused.⁵⁸ Subsequent events illustrate what Boston's revolution would have looked like if it had been planned and coordinated by the elites. With Andros's refusal to surrender, the militia moved out from the Town-House around two o' clock to surround the fort. Seeing thousands of men marching on the Fort, Lieutenant Condon "put out all her [*Rose's*] flags and pennants, and opened all her ports" but the ship failed to fire. Some historians maintain that Condon waffled without his captain aboard, insinuating Boston elites had made a wise decision to initiate the revolution by capturing Captain George, but far more likely Jarvis Coppindale and his supporters crippled Condon's ability to act. Captain George considered Coppindale "as one who chiefly opposed his design;" this may have been the point where he revealed his alliance with Small.⁵⁹

The mutinous crew forced Condon to outfit a small pinnace to go ashore. He was hard pressed to find volunteers because the crew of the pinnace consisted of just a small handful of unlikely men. Unton Deering, the violent nobleman and volunteer officer of the crew,

⁵⁸ At the Town-House in Boston: April 18th, 1689 in Nathaniel Byfield, *An Account of the Late Revolution in New-England* (London, 1689), 20.

⁵⁹ Letter of Samuel Prince, April 22, 1689 in Andrews, *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 186; Petition of Jarvis Coppindale, CO 5/855/66, TNA.

commanded the boat. He was aided solely by Captain George's loyal barber, Samuel Orders, and Doctor Edward Briggs. It goes without saying that barbers and surgeons were typically not part of royal navy landing parties nor could three men mount an effective rescue. Some witnesses on the Boston side believed the pinnace intended to free Andros from the troops surrounding the Fort. Yet neither John Riggs, Andros's servant who was with the governor during the revolution, nor an anonymous Andros supporter, possibly the Anglican Reverend Robert Ratcliff, mention an attempt by Andros to escape via the pinnace to the *Rose*. Condon's agenda in sending Deering, Orders, and Briggs ashore therefore was not a futile rescue attempt but rather to inform Captain George of the Coppindale led mutiny on board his ship. The militia seized the pinnace as it made landfall and escorted George's loyal supporters to the common gaol and to their target, Captain John George. Deering and Briggs once again resided in a Massachusetts Bay prison. Samuel Orders, meanwhile, spoke to Captain George to explain that Coppindale, Small, and the rest of the mutineers had reacted to what he had "reported Amongst the Shipe's Company," namely that George intended to seize vessels supporting William III to make up the crew's three years' worth of wages and join King James II in France. According to the sailor Will Ford, Orders said he would rather take responsibility for the mutiny and suffer the consequences than "the Capt. Should, but the Capt. Would not call him to an account for it." This exchange suggests that the crew had not completely turned on George but rather, due to Orders's rumors, they had insufficient knowledge to allow the ship to sail or support an effort to attack Boston's militia.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ "At the Council of Safety of the People and Conservation of the Peace, April 22, 1689," in Robert E. Moody and Richard C. Simmons eds., *The Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts: Selected Documents, 1689-1692* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1988), 56. For imprisonment and release see, Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, April 18, 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA and Deposition of William Ford, May 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 11.

Orders may have also delivered the ship's logbook to Captain George. After April 16, 1689, logbook entries are no longer written by Lieutenant Condon.⁶¹ The handwriting of the new author is remarkably similar to Captain George's when compared to his letter to Samuel Pepys on June 12, 1689. Upon George's death on May 24, 1690, the handwriting returns to that of Lieutenant Condon, further indicating that the new author had been Captain George. After the handwriting change, logbook entries maintain the voice of Lieutenant Condon and became a vehicle for George's deception.⁶²

As Orders conversed with George in prison, the revolution outside reached its climax. Under the promise of safe passage, Sir Edmund Andros left the besieged Fort at four o'clock with a small contingent to meet with the newly formed Council. He was summarily arrested, and soon thereafter Fort Mary surrendered without a shot fired. As night fell, the *Rose* and the Castle still had not officially surrendered. Condon, however, could not act due to the crew's mutiny. The next morning, the Council sent its own officers, not "the carpenter's co-conspirators" as one historian claims, on board the *Rose* to demand its surrender in the name of the Prince of Orange. Small had no need to send his supporters on shore because Jarvis Coppindale had already turned the crew. Upon receiving the officials, almost the entire crew "gave 3 cheers and struck yards and Topmast" – all but "Mr James Cuttler and Thomas Curtis" who "in anger replied God Dam the Prince of Orange and all such Rogues as stand for him." Cutler and Curtis stood with their friends Deering, Briggs, and Wiggoner in supporting George and Condon against the mutinous crew.⁶³ Three days later, the council released George, Wiggoner, Deering, Briggs, and Orders from prison but they confiscated the *Rose's* sails to keep the ship from fleeing. The Council

⁶¹ Logbook entries were often a day or two behind, which explains the discrepancy between the dates when the handwriting changes and the revolution.

⁶² Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

⁶³ Webb, *Lord Churchill's Coup*, 193; Depositions of John Skerret, John Punch, and John Sladd, May 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 11

informed Captain George of their action. Unable to depart Boston, George smartly stayed on shore as a guest in Colonel Samuel Shrimpton's house to plot a new course of action and influence the decisions of the council.

The Council of Safety, which formed on April 19, knew the maritime origins of the revolution and set out to discover why it had happened.⁶⁴ After taking the ships sails on April 22, they received a deposition from Small the next day outlining his part in the mutiny. On April 29 they asked for another deposition from Small but also included his fellow deserters. They recommended the Council ask the sailors on board for the truth of what happened on April 18 and provided a list of names. The Council followed Small's recommendation the next day, ordering Lieutenant Condon to send ashore Joseph Love, Jarvis Coppindale, John Scarlet, William Marsh, Thomas Williams, John Rimer, Samuel Orders, Thomas Curtis, and John Tressels. Small had welcomed the council to send not only friends but also George's supporters, Orders and Curtis. Captain George, however, learned about Small's recommendation and tried to prevent the examination. Condon replied to the Council that he "had a special command from the Captain this morning, not to lett any of his men goe ashoare until further orders from him." The majority of crew, however, felt they had received the blessing of the Council and expressly ignored George's demands. On May 1, 1689, seventy-five men, undoubtedly those who favored William III and England, mutinied, jailed Lieutenant Condon and his supporters, and many went on shore. Fifteen of them put their names to depositions detailing the vivid chronology of events,

⁶⁴ Most historians who study Boston's 1689 Revolution have examined the Massachusetts State Archives Collection Volume 107 but failed to analyze documents 2, 2a, 4-5, 9-13, which concern events on board the *Rose* and provide some of the strongest evidence that the sailors from the *Rose* initiated the revolution. Moody's and Simmon's large, 647 page edited collection, *The Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts: Selected Documents, 1689-1692*, draws heavily on the Massachusetts Archives Collection Volume 107 but neglects almost all of the relevant documents pertaining to the *Rose*. It does not include any of the sailors' depositions.

verified by the *Rose*'s ship log, leading to Small's capture of George, which incited Boston's populace to revolt.⁶⁵

Over the next few days, power on board the *Rose* resided in the crew's hands. On May 3, 1689 they sent a "Declaration" to the Council to inform them that they were "Protestants and True Subjects to the Crown of England." They arrested Condon and George's followers "until they be either convict[ed] or cleared by A legal trial, lest ere we are Aware we find what we most feaire being in Danger to be by them given Away to A Forreign Power." Upon learning of the crew's action, George went to the Council and informed them of "the Ill That might happen to his Ma'tys shipp, by such disorders, and that the Kings Navy was Govern'd by an Established Act of Parliament, and was wholly Independent from any Government ashoare." The threat worked – had not unruly seafarers caused havoc in Boston over the past three years? The Council therefore betrayed the seafarers to George and ordered them to follow the likes of Deering and Briggs. Jarvis Coppindale, Small, and some others refused to return on board.⁶⁶

The pendulum of power on the *Rose* swung back to the middle with the crew uncertain of the Council's support and George still reluctant to board the ship for fear of action against him. George believed he had sway in the Council through his friend and ally, Colonel Shrimpton. Tensions on the *Rose* boiled over on May 16 when a fire broke out in Boston. Some of the crew witnessed the fire and apparently joked about it. The ship's cook, a Mr. Beckett, "desired them nott to Lafe or shew any Joy." Condon, sensing an opportunity to exert his authority over the

⁶⁵ Samuel Shrimpton was on the Council and probably informed George of Small's actions against him. Deposition of Robert Small, April 29, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 4; Letter of the Council to David Condon and Letter of David Condon to the Council, April 30, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 5.

⁶⁶ The Declaration of Some of the Officers and Seamen Belonging to the *Rose* Friggot, May 3, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 13; This is one George's few truthful statements in his letter to Pepys, which has so tainted historians view of the seafarers of the *Rose*. He fails to mention that he lost complete control of the ship and that his supporters were arrested. Likewise, Condon is silent in the ship log, see, Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 218 and Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, May 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

wayward crew, struck the cook “upon the face and made him all of A gore Blud [blood] and Abused him by ill Languages caling him son of A whore, son of A Bitch, son of A slave, Little nasty Dog.” He compared the cook to Small and told him to “goe Ashore to him and be dam’d.” Small and Coppindale also sensed in the fire an opportunity to regain their previous position of power on the *Rose*. According to George, Small desired the Council to place him in charge of the ship and remove George as commander. Word spread around Boston that Captain George of the *Rose* and his officers had started the fire. A mob formed to break down Shrimpton’s door and whisk George away to prison. At the Council’s behest, three boats departed for the *Rose* to arrest Condon and five others.⁶⁷

The Council knew George and Condon had nothing to do with the fire but held them to protect themselves from an angry populace. Two days later, they released the officers back to their ship, much to the dismay of the crew. George again decided to remain ashore. Small’s credibility with both the *Rose*’s crew and the Council appears to have been hurt by his unwise power play. George took advantage; he kept steady pressure on the Council to force Small and Coppindale back onto the *Rose*; then on May 29, he regained the crews’ loyalty by having Condon and his officers declare full support for William III and England. Condon had the crew celebrate by firing twenty-one guns. By late May, George fully understood the circumstances in England. He knew that not one Royal Navy vessel had joined James II in France. He also knew that his crew wanted their wages and to return to England. George now shared these goals but he first had to silence Small and Coppindale and get his sails back from the Council.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Testimony of Andrew Newell, Samuel Berry, Edward Peneycot, Thomas Jull, May 18, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 32a; Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 218; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, May 16, 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

⁶⁸ On merchant vessels, wages and sailing plans were the two main reasons for mutinous action by seafarers. Once wages were paid or sailing plans made to their liking (usually the sailing plans made in their original contracts) the

On June 1, 1689, George won a major victory in the Council of Safety in his battle to regain full control of the *Rose* and its men:

Upon Complaint of Captain John George ... Ordered that all persons belonging to said frigatt now on shore do forthwith repair to their duty onboard, unless they shew just cause unto the Council to the contrary. And that no Officer or Seamen belonging to sd. Frigate be here after found on shore without certificate from the Captain, Lieutenant, or Chief Officer for the time being on board on pain of imprisonment. This order to be posted up at the Coffee house and the Ship Tavern in Boston.⁶⁹

Oddly, the Council concurrently formed a committee to investigate the actions of George and his officers. These Boston elites apparently knew very little about the seafaring life for they had given George's officers great power over their men by forcing them to stay on board the *Rose*. Coppindale, a fully literate and educated officer, read the order and fatefully decided to submit to it. Coppindale had learned that George "had obtained favor of the Council" by "surrendering the ship to his Majesties [William's] service" and perhaps felt confident his actions would go unpunished. George's men, however, refused to let bygones be bygones and as soon as Coppindale stepped on board the *Rose* they clapped him in irons.⁷⁰

Coppindale's incarceration provides the best piece of evidence to contradict Captain George's oft quoted and relied upon interpretation of Boston's 1689 revolution. As he languished in prison on board the *Rose* with irons about his legs, Coppindale managed to compose a letter to his friend, Robert Small; it is worth quoting in its entirety:

seafarers often returned to work for the same captain, see, Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1987), chap. 5; Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 218; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, May 29, 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

⁶⁹ Colonel Samuel Shrimpton was present at the meeting which sent the seafarers back to the *Rose*, see, At the Council of Safety of the People and Conservation of the Peace, June 1, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 81. He undoubtedly was instrumental in its creation. As George notes, Shrimpton "was very kind to me in all this Affaire," see, Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, p. 217.

⁷⁰ Petition of Jarvis Coppindale, CO 5/855/66, TNA.

Brother Small,

The first of June I was put into the Irons. The Seventh of June I was Robed [Robbed] of all I had about me by [John] Wiggoner and [Unton] Dearing: Then the[y] ransack my chest in the steorage privately. I knowing nothing of it, and what I have lost I cannot tell, until I am att Liberty to look over my things, the[y] took what they pleased and [I] doe still continue in Irons, but I thank the Lord that gives me the Patience to suffer for my King and Country. So having no time to write but by stealth I rest your faithful friend

June the 13th 1689

Jarvis Coppindale

[P.S.] I had both Bonds and Bill for the receipt [receipt] of money in England whether they be safe I can give noe account.

Over the course of three years in New England, Coppindale had apparently amassed quite a bit of wealth. If George intended for France, the navigator would have lost not only his three years' worth of wages but also the ability to cash in his bonds and bills. Coppindale may have been a true and loyal subject to the crown but he had self-serving economic reasons to keep the *Rose* from sailing anywhere else but England. His English bonds and bills must have held significant value because two days after writing this letter to Small, we find "Mr. Deering one of our [the *Rose*'s] voluntiers" on a ship for London with his newly acquired loot. This same Unton Deering was overheard "upon the quarterdeck" on April 28, 1689 "wishing and swearing that ten or twelve French ships would com[e] in and batter the towne down and set it on fire about their Ears." Like Coppindale, however, English bonds and bills trumped Deering's favor of France.⁷¹

With Coppindale in prison, George regained most of the crew's support. On June 7, the committee investigating George asked Condon to send ashore sixteen men to testify against the captain. Condon refused them and the committee failed to follow up on the issue. George,

⁷¹ Letter of Jarvis Coppindale to Robert Small, June 13, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 94; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, June 15, 1689, ADM 51/3955, TNA; The rest of Deering's statement on April 28, 1689 is intriguing because he appears to make a joke about his time in prison in Charlestown. After Deering's tirade about French ships attacking the town, "Samuel Mixture made Answer what shall we doe then Mr Dearing replyed we shall done well enough, only it might be they [the French] would put us in Prison," see, Deposition of Samuel Mixture and Thomas Williamson, Mass. Arch., 107: 12.

meanwhile, plotted with some of Boston's leading merchants, Samuel Shrimpton among them, to obtain his sails from the Council. To that end, the merchants submitted a petition on his behalf on June 10. They assumed the "danger" from the captain was "over" and the merchants needed the *Rose* to help protect their shipping from pirates that had mysteriously appeared on the Massachusetts coast. George and the merchants, however, could not convince the Council, nor the committee investigating George, of his innocence. They denied the merchants and George's own request for the sails, informing the captain he could have his sails back when the Council received orders from England. The committee investigating George probably played an important role in this decision. They conveyed to the Council that "It is credibly reported that one of the Principle evidences [Coppindale] is on board in Irons, the rest of them to keep from under that Confinement have signed a paper wherein they seame to lay blame to Mr. Small and that they doe not desire to come onshore any more about that matter." The committee also concluded that the decision to force the seafarers to remain on the *Rose* hindered their investigation. By this point, however, the Council had completely lost the crew's trust.⁷²

The Council's decision not to return the *Rose*'s sails infuriated George. Their rejection forced George to compose a fateful and historically influential letter on June 12 to the Secretary of Admiralty, Samuel Pepys. George did not want to write this letter – if his desires had been met, namely the return of his "sailes" and "orders...to return home," historians would not have this farcical letter to distort their histories. Naturally, George did not admit to the English Admiralty that many members of his crew believed he intended for France, much to the

⁷² For George's account of his attempt to get his sails back and the Council's actions see, Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 218-219; Petition of Boston Merchants, June 10, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 92; Captain George's Letter to the Government, June 11, 1689, CO 5/855/32, TNA; Report of Committee Investigating Captain George, undated, Mass. Arch., 107: 32. Although this report is undated, I am confident that the jailed individual was Jarvis Coppindale and Captain George places the date in which the committee asked for the testimonies of his seafarers on June 7, 1689. Condon's refusal was also referred to in the report.

detriment of their pocketbooks.⁷³ He did not mention that Small seized him just as his ship prepared to sail. He did not admit that his officers had been imprisoned. Nor does he give any reason for the crew's mutinous behavior beyond misleading attacks on Robert Small. He does not mention Jarvis Coppindale at all and for good reason.

George instead complained that "no reasonable" evidence of the Glorious Revolution had arrived in Boston until May 26 and 29 when he decided to declare for William. He then attempted to deflect responsibility for Boston's revolution by falsely claiming, "the People of this place and country pretending themselves dissatisfied with the Government of Sir Edmund Andros rose up in Arms, seiz'd me first, and run me into the common Goal, by the Instigation of Robert Small my Carpenter." Small had been with the "Rebells" for days "spreading rumours" that Andros meant to set Boston on fire on one end of town whilst George fired the other, "then with our Gunns from the Friggatt to beat downe the rest, and goe away in the smoake, designing for France." Seeking the moral high ground, George immediately states, "w'ch doubtless will be thought unreasonable to believe." Small would have agreed with George for he said nothing of the sort in his depositions to the Council.⁷⁴ The "notorious" carpenter was not yet done, he "went downe to the Platforme and travers'd severall Gunns against the Frigg't, and would have fired

⁷³ There are twenty-three seafarers names attached to depositions accusing George and his officers of wrongdoing, see, Mass. Arch., 107: 2, 4, 5, 9-12, and 32a. John Love, the Gunner, mentioned by name and rank in the first list of men the Council desired to question and Captain George states in his letter, "The Gunner and Boatsw'n have both declined theire duty and obedience since these troubles," makes twenty-four seamen against George see, Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 219. As previously mentioned, seventy-five men deserted the ship for Boston on May 1, 1689. Randolph writing in November 1688 put the crew's number "above eighty," which suggests the only men who stayed on board were those loyal to George and part of Unton Deering's "gang," see, Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, November 8, 1688, *Edward Randolph*, 6: 281.

⁷⁴ Stanwood's recent study shows just how distorted the historical record has become because of George's letter: "Additionally, according to Small, George and Andros conspired to escape from Boston in a blaze of glory. The governor "intended to fire the Towne at one end," while the Rose fired on the other, after which the officers would "goe away in the smoake, designeing for France." Stanwood attributes to Small quotes derived from George's letter even though we have Small's own words to suggest otherwise, see, Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed*, 102. In two depositions, Small only detailed events concerning the *Rose* and George's intent to sail for France, see, Deposition of Robert Small, Mass. Arch., 107: 2a and 4.

them, but was prevented by the people: he proposed severall ways of takeing or burning the shipp, but not Adhered to.” Small apparently eagerly desired the death of his “faithful friend,” Jarvis Coppindale, who was on board the *Rose* during the revolution. After effectively smearing Small’s name in the historical record, George adamantly denied he intended for France. In fact, George was “sure it never entred into my [his] thoughts, much less that I [he] should take a resolution thereof.” The thought had most definitely entered George’s thoughts, just as it had for Royal Navy commanders in England. We will never know if George intended to act on those thoughts because his crew ensured the ship did not sail from Boston. Ironically, the very man George wrote to, Pepys, had been removed from his position and resided in prison on suspicion of supporting James II.⁷⁵

Captain George had a fine mind for deceit. Samuel Prince recognized George’s character shortly after the revolution: “But as it is incident to corrupt nature to lay blame of our evil deeds anywhere rather than on ourselves, so Captain George casts all the blame now upon that devil Randolph.” The committee formed to investigate George agreed. They gave a final report on George and his supporters on July 4, 1689 wherein they concluded that George and several others were “persons disaffected to their present Majesties and Government.” Without testimonies from the crew, however, the Council felt it could not press charges. The Council had had its chance on May 3, 1689 to charge George and his supporters when the seafarers controlled the ship but they had acted too tentatively. Seafarers on the *Rose* respected strength and quick action, as demonstrated by George, St. Loe, Grimsditch, Deering, and Robert Small. The newly formed Council represented the antithesis of such ideals, which made cooperation impossible for

⁷⁵ The remainder of the George’s letter, which details George’s engagement with the Council to regain control of his crew and sails, appears fairly accurate when matched with existing records, see, Letter of Captain George to Samuel Pepys, June 12, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 218-219.

the majority of the crew. Coppindale, the erudite navigator and mathematician, made the most rigorous attempt and had faith the Council would protect and support him. Coppindale, as we know, found himself shackled in irons for his efforts and petitioning the king in faraway England for his release. Small, the savvier of the two regarding seafaring life, disappeared when he knew they had lost to George. No orders from the Council would put him back on board the *Rose*.⁷⁶

As a man of action, George had no intention of allowing his ship to wallow endlessly in Boston's harbor. He had a restless crew who desired a return to England and he needed to appease them. In a paradoxical twist, the Council did a role reversal with Captain George in the minds of many of the *Rose's* seafarers; the Council now held the crew's wages hostage owing to their refusal to return the *Rose's* sails. At least the seafarers were consistent. Even before writing Pepys, George developed his most elaborate scheme yet to force the Council to return his sails; he fitted out pirates in Boston to harass the New England coast. George also had some of his men and acquaintances volunteer to join the pirates. Thomas Pounds and William Coward had served on board the *Rose* while Thomas Hawkins had married into the family of George's benefactor, Samuel Shrimpton. The Council, rather than give George his sails, fitted out at its own expense two sloops, the *Revenge* and *Mary*, to deal with the pirates. The *Mary* successfully captured Pounds at Tarpaulin Cove in October 1689. Ned Loper, a Dutchman, apprehended Hawkins, who had left Pounds earlier. Hawkins and Thomas Johnson confessed to George's involvement. Hawkins's connections in Boston ensured that many of Boston's elites would step forward to protect the pirates on behalf of the powerful Councilman and merchant. Shrimpton's involvement in George's scheme is unknown; however, historians do know much of his wealth came from illegal trade with pirates, which continued well into the 1690s. All the pirates, except

⁷⁶ Letter of Samuel Prince, April 22, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 189; To the Honored Governor and Council, July 4, 1689, Mass. Arch., 107: 174; Petition of Jarvis Coppindale, CO 5/855/66, TNA.

for Johnson, received reprieves from the gallows. The Admiralty, meanwhile, rewarded Pounds with a Royal Navy captaincy after his trial in England and within a few years he was serving in Virginia under the supervision of Edmund Andros.⁷⁷

The Council declined to censure George for his part in the pirate conspiracy and when they received orders in December from England to give his sails back they readily did so. The Council had had enough of the *Rose* frigate, its captain, and its crew. George immediately set to work, preparing the decrepit ship for sail. The *Rose*'s sails, however, had been destroyed by neglect and George had to acquire a new set. Still, George had the ship ready to sail by late March 1690. The night the ship sailed, George whipped the crew to action by spreading rumors that the Council intended to hold the ship and retake its sails. The Council had, in fact, ordered the *Rose* to convoy two mast ships from Piscataqua to London. George wanted to ensure the crews loyalty and support through anger against the Council. It was a narrative he likely desired to parade in front of the admiralty when he arrived in London. The crew, fearful of yet another delay in obtaining their wages, rapidly bent the ship's new sails and fled Boston in the middle of the night.⁷⁸

On May 24, 1690, as the *Rose* sailed for England, Captain George met his match in deceit. A frigate flying English colors hailed the *Rose* and came up beside it. As two ships came abreast, the frigate "Immediately put Abroad his French Colours and fired a broad side on the *Rose*." The two ships engaged in a furious battle for over two hours. Shrapnel tore through the

⁷⁷ Deposition of Jacobus Loper, undated, MSS. Suffolk County Supreme Judicial Court Records, 30: 2539; Mather, *A Vindication of New England in Andros Tracts*, 2: 54-55; For an excellent study that makes the same argument regarding George's role in supporting Pounds and Hawkins see, John H. Edmonds, "Captain Thomas Pounds, Pilot, Pirate, Cartographer, and Captain in the Royal Navy," in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Transactions*, XX (1917-1919): 29-84.

⁷⁸ Orders to Restore the *Rose* Frigate's Sails in "Captain Thomas Pounds, Pilot, Pirate, Cartographer, and Captain in the Royal Navy," 64-65; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, December 1689 - March 1690, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

Rose's rigging and new sails but the crew fought valiantly and the French man of war fled. The French commander, however, had ordered his men to take "particular aim at a Commander on deck (brandishing his sword and encouraging his men to fight) and shot him down." The brave man in question was Captain John George, who fought and died with his friend and ship master, John Wiggoner, Thomas Hawkins, the pirate, and Samuel Mixture, a seafarer who had provided depositions against the audacious captain.⁷⁹ Only in the maritime world could such a strange group of men die fighting together against an enemy that a few months before could have been their allies.

With George's death, his role in Boston's revolution and supporting pirates quietly disappeared from the histories. Increase Mather remarked on the impact of George's death on the historical record, declaring George "was full fraught with a Bloody Malice against that honest people [Bostonians], which in time he would have shown had not a *French Bullet* by the way carried him to his own place; and so it becomes us to say less of him: doubtless he wants not embalming by the *Art of Apothecary!*" To realize the truth behind the origins of Boston's 1689 revolution and deliver justice to Jarvis Coppindale, Robert Small and the rest of the *Rose*'s seafarers, "embalming" George "by the *Art of Apothecary*" is necessary, if a tad impolite.⁸⁰

* * *

The *Rose*'s stealthy departure from Boston left in its wake four years of profound political, economic, and social change. Captain John George's pursuit of riches and power clashed with the dreams and aspirations of both Boston's elites and other English officials sent to

⁷⁹ An Account of the Fight between the *Rose* Frigatt and a French Man of War off of Cape Sables in Edmonds, "Captain Thomas Pounds, Pilot, Pirate, Cartographer, and Captain in the Royal Navy," 82-83; Abstracts of Letters to Thomas Brinkley, CO 5/855/357, TNA; Log of the H.M.S. *Rose*, May 24 and 25, 1690, ADM 51/3955, TNA.

⁸⁰ Mather, *A Vindication of New England in Andros Tracts*, 2: 54.

impose imperial control. The ambiguity surrounding authority in Boston after the dissolution of their Charter allowed George to become a little “Caesar.”⁸¹ Immoral crew members like Unton Deering could instill “terror” into the local population through their excessive play and revenge schemes without major repercussions. Then, when James II fled for France, George took a major risk – a risk Royal Navy commanders elsewhere shunned. He ignored his crew’s desire to remain loyal to England and collect their wages; he refused to inform them of his intended sailing plans. The crew reacted normally and mutinied, setting in motion the events of April 18, 1689.

George knew his mistakes. He also knew how to undo them and regain his crew’s loyalty. He used his authority to undermine the rebellious seafarers both in Boston and in England. His letter to Pepys transformed the historical record and left hidden his role in inciting Boston’s 1689 Revolution. He aggressively suppressed the story of Jarvis Coppindale, Robert Small, and the other brave seafarers who cried out for their right to collect their wages and return to England and their families. Boston’s Council of Safety failed to recognize the threat George posed to his seafarers. They blundered into a seafaring drama without the maritime knowledge necessary to support the crew effectively, even though they distrusted George. The Council betrayed Coppindale and the crew’s trust because they fully supported and relied on the system which gave men like George immense authority over their seamen. Historians have likewise failed to heed the call of the oppressed seafarers of the *Rose*.

There is, of course, another story that can be told – a story not hidden by a ship captain’s deceit. This story entails Boston and English elites appropriation of the seafarers’ mutiny and how they turned it to their advantage. The discourse elites developed after Boston’s revolution grew naturally from their own experiences. The Mathers and their allies placed the revolution

⁸¹ Edward Randolph to John Sansom, June 30, 1689, *Edward Randolph*, 6: 183-184.

within their long struggle for political, economic, and religious freedom.⁸² Randolph, Palmer, and Andros sought to portray the revolution as a conspiracy developed by “New England’s Faction” that had resisted their agenda of imperial control.⁸³ These particular elites who engaged in a transatlantic debate knew little about events on board the *Rose* or the Boston waterfront on April 18, 1689.⁸⁴ Nor did they care. They had their own battles to wage and hatreds to address. The seafarers, too, had a very real battle to fight over – wages and sailing plans. Coppindale had very real English bonds and bills to exchange in England. The seafarers of the *Rose* knew from their captain and officers that direct action and force effectively challenged authority.

On April 18, 1689, the seafarers of the *Rose* acted, and in so doing transformed Boston’s historical trajectory. To protect Andros and his supporters, Boston elites felt compelled to endorse the revolution and King William III. The king, however, never fully trusted the accounts coming from Boston’s elite men. As Increase Mather related, “The Earle of Monmouth assured me that the King was offended at New England because they had Imprisoned their Governor and could prove nothing against him.” He dismissed all charges against Andros and his supporters. He then rewarded Andros with the governorship of Virginia. King William’s distrust of Bostonians became more apparent when he granted Massachusetts a new charter in 1691 that removed all religious qualifications for voting and holding office. The king would also now appoint all governors. Still, in the aftermath of the 1689 revolution, Boston elites threw their full

⁸² Mather, *A Vindication of New England* in *Andros Tracts*, 2: 54; List of Charges against Andros and his Government, Mass. Arch., 35: 254-276.

⁸³ A Particular Account of the Late Revolution, 1689 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 193-210; C.D., *New England's Faction Discovered*, in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 253-67; John Palmer, *An Impartial Account of the State of New England* (London, 1690) in *Andros Tracts*, 1: 21-62; Andros’s Report of his Administration, 1690-91 in Andrews ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 221-35.

⁸⁴ The elites on the Council of Safety who did know of the sailors’ role in starting the revolution had a war torn, impoverished, and rebellious colony to rule. As they prepared a case against Andros and his administration in 1690 they also mounted an expedition against the French in Port Royal in order to show its loyalty and support of King William III see, Phillip Haffenden, *New England in the English Nation, 1689-1713* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 88-90.

support behind William's war effort with France and prosecuted previously welcomed pirates and smugglers to prove their loyalty.⁸⁵ The former decision would have a direct and negative impact on Boston's seafaring community through local and Royal Navy impressment. The latter decision confirmed that Boston merchants would adhere to England's maritime laws and practices. The sailors of the *Rose*, ironically, had helped to create a political, economic, and social environment not unlike the one they had left behind in England.

⁸⁵ "The Autobiography of Increase Mather" quoted in Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, 236. For Andros and Massachusetts charter of 1691 see also, Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, 230-236 and 240-254.

3.0 IMPRESSMENT AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF BOSTON SEAFARERS

The last two decades of the seventeenth century saw the introduction of the Royal Navy and the spread of credit-based economies in the American colonies, which transformed Boston's maritime and mercantile communities. Royal Navy vessels introduced new sources of authority in the ship captain, new capital in ship outfitting and repairing, and new diversity in maritime labor. The English institution of impressment shadowed Royal Navy vessels, directly and negatively impacting Boston's maritime labor force. Impressment drew many Boston seafarers into a growing pool of transatlantic maritime laborers who, because of their occupation, could be torn away from family, friends, and their home community for years to protect the interests of empire and capital.

Scholarship on Royal Navy impressment in Boston typically highlights the 1740s, culminating in the highly dramatic Knowles Riot. In November 1747, Admiral Charles Knowles had his press gangs sweep Boston's harbor and waterfront, indiscriminately seizing seamen and waterfront laborers. The trajectory of the Knowles Riot is uncannily similar to the 1689 Revolution discussed in the previous chapter. According to reports, "foreign" seamen initiated a riot, imprisoning hostages from among the press gang officers and crew. They were soon joined by locals with grievances of their own against the Royal Navy, the local government, and merchants of Boston. The rioters destroyed merchant property, and then marched upon the governor's home to demand the release of the impressed sailors. Also like the Revolution of 1689, historians have speculated that powerful elites secretly oversaw the riot because merchants were upset that impressment hindered their trade. This approach diminishes the maritime

component of the riot while stressing local concerns at all socio-economic levels. It also adds to a pervasive myth that Boston and New England had a culture of impressment that featured colonial elites and seafarers cooperatively resisting Royal Navy press gangs.¹

The predominance of the 1740s in the historiography of impressment has caused historians to overlook the equally or more important 1690s. This decade saw the introduction of heavy-handed impressment practices in Boston and other colonies by the Royal Navy. Boston especially drew unwanted attention from undermanned Royal Navy vessels because it possessed North America's largest pool of maritime labor and attracted the most incoming vessels. More importantly, after the Boston 1689 Revolution Boston elites desired to demonstrate their loyalty to King William III, often at the expense of lower-class men. Although Massachusetts governors and Royal Navy captains sometimes had fierce disagreements over issues of power, seafaring men in Boston rarely benefitted from those arguments and frequently experienced hardships at the hands of both parties. For many Boston sailors, impressment invariably broke their relationships to family and friends, and many found it difficult to return to their homeport. And yet when local ship captains attempted to protect sailors from impressment in the West Indies and England, merchants in Boston disapproved. Sailors, meanwhile, sought fair compensation for their labor in dangerous and trying times. This chapter seeks to explain how the Royal Navy

¹ For overview of the Knowles riot and studies emphasizing the 1740s see, Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25(3) (July 1968): 371-407; John Lax and William Pencak, "The Knowles Riot and the Crisis of the 1740's in Massachusetts," *Perspectives in American History* 10 (1976): 163-214; Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 251-253; Nicholas Rogers, *Press Gang: Naval Impressment and Its Opponents in Georgian Britain* (London: Continuum, 2007), 86-89; Denver Brunsman, "The Knowles Atlantic Impressment Riots of the 1740s," *Early American Studies* 5 (Fall 2007): 324-66 and *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013). Brunsman argues Massachusetts had a culture of impressment that united local elites with the local maritime community in opposition to impressment see, *The Evil Necessity*, 127-128, 135, 190-191, and 222-223. His contention rests heavily on the case study of colonial Salem by Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh that emphasizes the part-time nature of maritime labor in Salem see, Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

and Boston elites, each in their own way, forcibly internationalized a generation of Boston seafarers for the benefit of town, empire, and trade. It ends in 1708 when Queen Anne declared impressment in the American colonies illegal, an important date and victory for Atlantic seafarers.

* * *

King William's War radically changed Royal Navy impressment practices for all English seafarers including those in Boston. Impressment under the Stuart kings, as historian Christopher Lloyd notes, "was done on a temporary basis to fit out a ship or an expedition, or to man the fleet during the summer months." Impressed seafarers' subjugated status lasted only until the crew was discharged and received their pay or tickets in England. Seafarers had the opportunity to return home, visit family and friends, and take care of their finances before once again confronting the threat of impressment anew in the spring. The few colonial seafarers who had the misfortune of being impressed had an opportunity to flee back home. King William altered this practice during the winter of 1692 – 1693, ordering that impressed seafarers would henceforth be obligated to endure continuous service until the conclusion of the war or death. Seafarers could, and frequently did, take matters into their own hands and obtained freedom through desertion. This law further encouraged the Royal Navy to practice, in the words of Captain George St. Loe, "that epidemical grievance, which so much galls and disturbs the seamen ... namely of being turned over from ship to ship." The Royal Navy frequently turned seafarers over at the end of a voyage from one vessel to another in order to complete the manning of a departing ship. In the process, many turned-over seafarers were demoted, could not get their pay, and lost esteemed crewmates and ship captains. Turning over also decreased the likelihood that impressed seafarers could desert. Like impressment, the practice of turning over seamen demonstrated to English

seafarers that they were both unfree and unappreciated by those in charge. From 1692 onward, Boston seafarers, too, increasingly faced the prospect of finding themselves hauled aboard a Royal Navy vessel against their will to serve the interests of King and Country.²

King William resorted to continuous service for impressed seafarers because the Royal Navy's faced an acute manning problem. England's war with France during the late seventeenth century required the service of over 40,000 seamen. By 1697, the English Navy had nearly 50,000 men on its payroll. Economic theorists, meanwhile, believed that England's commerce required an additional 33,000 to 48,000 seamen to operate smoothly. Suffice it to say, England's seafaring population was not nearly large enough to accommodate both the Royal Navy and merchant marine during wartime. In the late 1670s, Sir William Petty estimated that England's ability to man both the navy and merchant marine fell short by roughly a third.³

The needs of the navy and commerce increased dramatically during King William's War, escalating the competition between the merchants, privateers, and the Royal Navy for maritime labor. In this competition each contestant had its own weapons: merchant vessels had high wages and, depending on the trade, possibilities for advancement; privateers had dreams of fortune and less severe discipline; and Royal Navy vessels had state-sanctioned violence in the form of press gangs. "Their Majesties' ships," as seafarer Edward Barlow observed, were also "better victualled than most merchant ships ... and their work is not so hard." In England, the Royal Navy and press gangs had the upper hand but in the American colonies ambiguous power-relations between Royal Navy ship captains and colonial governors muddled the waters.

² Christopher Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200–1860: A Social Survey* (London: Collins, 1968), 124; Captain George St. Lo, *England's Interest; Or, a Discipline for Seamen* (1694) in J.S. Bromley Ed., *The Manning of the Royal Navy: Selected Public Pamphlets, 1693–1873* (London: Navy Records Society, 1976), 39. For more on the continuous service of impressed seamen and the practice of turning over see, Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity*, 30–31.

³ Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200–1860*, 114; William Petty, *Political Arithmetic* (London, 1690), 48–49.

Furthermore, seafarers in the western hemisphere had grown accustomed to defending their homes on their own terms by joining privateers and province vessels commissioned by colonial governors. The Royal Navy had been an Old World problem but as England increased its imperial presence in the colonies through Royal Navy station ships and convoys, the accompanying impressment practices met fierce resistance from colonial seafarers.⁴

Impressment was not foreign to Bostonians or the larger Massachusetts Bay colony. During times of crisis, town militias frequently turned to impressment to defend frontier communities. King Philip's War (1675-1676) saw the use of impressment on a large scale. In 1688, Boston authorities once again resorted to impressment to defend the Maine frontier when Captain John George of the *Rose* instigated war with the Abenaki. In September of 1688, Judge Samuel Sewall observed town constables converted into press gangs seizing at least 54 men, all of whom were subsequently shipped off to Maine. This form of impressment was generally accepted as necessary for the defense of the colony but even under dire circumstances impressment met resistance and outright defiance. During King Philip's War, young men went to great lengths to evade constables on impressment errands. At other times, impressed men took matters into their own hands and deserted. For example, in April of 1689, the impressed soldiers serving in Maine and New Hampshire deserted en masse and marched on Boston, leaving frontier communities virtually defenseless. Violent resistance to local impressment, however, was exceedingly rare.⁵

⁴ Edward Barlow, *Barlow's Journal of His Life at Sea in King's Ships, East and West Indiamen, and Other Merchantmen, 1659–1703*, ed. Basil Lubbock, 2 vols. (London, 1934), 2: 426.

⁵ M. Halsey Thomas ed., *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 2 vols. (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 1:176-178; For King Philip's War see, Kyle F. Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen during King Philip's War* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 58-60.

Impressment into the Royal Navy exacted a far more hostile response from Boston's seafaring population. Sailors knew that service in the navy would carry them far from loved ones and into a harsh, sometimes deadly, maritime world with limited freedom. Remarking on the Royal Navy's urgent need for sailors in 1711, Thomas Hutchinson declared that "This could be done in no other way than an impress," he continued, "The inhabitants [of Boston], it must be owned, would not have submitted to it but, in general, would have preferred a prison on shore to a man of war at sea." The same held true for those Boston seafarers who faced large scale impressment practices for the first time during the early to mid-1690s.⁶

Unlike Captain George and the H.M.S. *Rose*, the Royal Navy vessels stationed in Boston in the 1690s had wartime crews derived in large part from impressed seafarers in England. These men frequently deserted upon arriving in the American colonies, oftentimes with the encouragement and aid of local merchants and ship captains. As Edward Randolph commented in 1695, "it is a common practice of masters and owners of merchant-ships to hire at extraordinary wages the sailors in the King's ships in the Colonies (as for example in New England), whereby those ships are incapacitated to perform their service, and the King's captains are compelled to press men from vessels trading to and from those plantations."⁷

Boston merchants had a difficult time finding enough sailors even without competition from the Royal Navy, which took a two-year hiatus from Boston after the *Rose* departed in May of 1690. Consequently, when two Royal Navy ships, H.M.S. *Conception* and H.M.S. *Nonesuch*, arrived in early spring 1692, merchants could not resist signing eager deserters. The *Nonesuch*

⁶ Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay from the charter of King William and Queen Mary* (Boston, 1767), 192

⁷ Memorial of Edward Randolph to Lords of Trade and Plantations, December 13, 1695 in Public Record Office: *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: America and the West Indies*, 45 vols. (London: Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860-1994), vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 2198 (hereafter cited as CSPPC).

lost enough men from desertion that the captain, Richard Short, immediately began impressing local seafarers. Maritime laborers reacted by fleeing Boston or militantly defending themselves. Joshua Brodbent commented in June of 1692 “that most of the seamen are now away, and that when the press goes round for more the press-masters are knocked down at broad noon.” Bostonians viewed the Royal Navy as a foreign entity that threatened their prosperity and young men but at the same time, sought the navy’s protection from potential French invasions. Merchants, seafarers, and townsfolk all expected the new governor to look after their interests and suppress the worst abuses stemming from the Royal Navy’s presence.⁸

Governor Phips knew the maritime world was unforgiving. Initially, he sympathized with Captain Short out of “respect to his commission.” Phips had earned his fortune and knighthood by pillaging the remains of shipwrecked Spanish vessels in the Caribbean. He understood what it was like to be a commissioned Royal Navy officer disrespected by colonial authorities. In December of 1683, he brought a London-based “crew of cutthroats and unemployed privateersmen” to Boston where their riotous behavior outraged the local inhabitants. According to Joseph Phillips, an acquaintance lured him into a room with Phips’s treasure-seeking seafarers, at which point the villains “constrained” Phillips and he was “forced to drink contrary to his desire or inclination.” Without his knowledge, the frolicking sailors managed to cut his coat pocket and steal forty shillings. Phips’s men caused such a commotion that the town constables ordered them back on board the ship, receiving taunts and a beating for their efforts. Phips defended his men, boasting to the constables that his commission gave him more authority than the Governor and council. Phips, in turn, received the stinging rebuke of then-governor Simon Bradstreet. In 1692, Phips confronted a similarly defiant and disrespectful Royal Navy

⁸ Governor Sir William Phips to Lords of the Admiralty, February 28, 1693, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 131; Joshua Broadbent to Lieutenant-Governor Francis Nicholson, June 21, 1692, *CSPC*, vol. 13 (1689-1692), no. 2283.

ship captain who angered the merchant and maritime communities, as he threatened Phips's interests.⁹

Like any good ship captain, Phips handled Short's disobedience with a boisterous show of force. As circumstances regarding impressment deteriorated over the course of 1692, Phips "forbade" Short "to press at all without my warrant." He became further incensed when he discovered that even as the Royal Navy captain impressed local men, he profited from hiring out his regulars to serve "on board Private vessels to saile into other parts." On January 4, 1693, Phips felt compelled to defend the honor of Boston's seafaring men and, as we shall see, his own interests. He confronted Captain Short on Boston's waterfront and, after a testy exchange, Short "provoked the Governor to strike him." In dramatic fashion, the governor and ship captain brawled as dumbfounded spectators looked on. Phips emerged from the affray victorious. He promptly had Captain Short removed from command, arrested, and tossed into "the Common goal [sic] of Boston." When he wrote to inform the Lords of the Admiralty of Short's dismissal, Phips justified his decision as a defense of Boston's seafaring men because Short, through impressment, had "used his power to make a prey of the King's subjects." Sir William Phips, to put it bluntly, was the worst sort of hypocrite.¹⁰

Sixth months prior to beating Short for impressing sailors and "lending" their services to merchants, Phips likewise harassed and abused Boston's maritime community. Perhaps smarting from his failed Quebec assault in 1691, Phips spent the summer of 1692 planning a naval

⁹ Viola F. Barnes, "The Rise of William Phips," *The New England Quarterly*, 1(July, 1928): 271-94, quote at 274; Suffolk County Supreme Judicial Court Files (hereafter cited as SCSJCF), Massachusetts State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA), case no. 2274.

¹⁰ Governor Sir William Phips to Lords of the Admiralty, February 28, 1693, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 131; Depositions of Nathaniel Hatch and Francis Foxcroft, August 14, 1694, Massachusetts Archives Collection, 328 vols. (hereafter cited as Mass. Arch.), 61: 463-464 and 466. For evidence that Short hired out his men to Boston ship captains see, Deposition of Benjamin Emes, August 17, 1694, Mass. Arch., 61: 468-471.

adventure into French waters. According to Boston merchant Nathaniel Oliver, Phips strong-armed Oliver and fellow merchants Andrew Belcher and Timothy Clarke into providing the ship *Swan* captained by Thomas Gilbert and the brig *Elizabeth and Sarah* for the expedition. Contrary to customary practice, the governor refused to pay the merchants but instead offered a share (5/16) of the plunder from the expedition. Oliver saw no choice but to consent to the governor's demands.¹¹

Phips now had vessels for his expedition but no sailors. Nathaniel Oliver skeptically questioned Phips "what he would doe for men" whereupon Phips arrogantly responded that "was his business and none of ours." Phips had an easy solution. He did exactly what Captain Short would do, ordering the town constables to scour Boston's taverns, boarding houses, and the waterfront to impress any sailors that might be found. As one of the constables noted, "he received such a warrant [to impress sailors] and by virtue thereof he impressed men but did not see them put on board either of the said vessels." One of those sailors, William Snowton, related the abuses he and his compatriots suffered at the hands of Phips's men. The town constables dragged Snowton from William Huff's house and delivered him on board the ship *Swan* where he was held for three weeks. Snowton and two other impressed men managed to escape with a canoe but not without drawing the attention of the *Swan*'s crew who, after a warning, began firing on the fleeing sailors. One of the shots wounded Snowton and another one of the men but through perseverance they managed to get ashore at Noddles Island. Phips's men followed in pursuit, eventually capturing "them at said Noodles Island & after beating them Carried them on board the said Ship Swan, & there put them all in Irons, this Deponent lay in Irons about a dayes time, the other two persons lay in Irons above a week." According to Snowton, "There was also

¹¹ Deposition of Nathaniel Oliver, August 22, 1694, Mass. Arch., 61: 485.

at the same time on board the said Ship nine other men in Irons for endeavoring to run away.” Nathaniel Oliver confirmed that Phips was employing impressment as a means to fill his complement, as he “was an eye witness to one that was prest out of sloop Coming up when I was on board Ship Swan nere Long Island.” He was convinced “that halfe the men on board would have left the vessell if they could butt being forced to goe chose Rather to signe.”¹²

Phips had a good understanding of seafaring men: after weeks of poor treatment, he proposed that the men should volunteer for the voyage and receive a share of the spoils. If they did not sign his articles “they should then goe as pressed men & have the King’s pay.” Left with only bad choices, many of the seafarers, including Snowton, signed the articles. Phips’s illegal treatment of the pressed men underscored a growing trend in Boston. When brought before a council to answer for his actions, the governor declared that although “several men were imprest” by his warrants, in the end “the men that served in said vessells were such as went voluntarily.” This, too, was a falsehood, as both Snowton and Nathaniel Oliver noted that a few of the men resisted signing the articles. Even the merchants understood that Phips had mistreated Boston’s maritime community. Oliver asserted that “wee often told his Exelencey [sic] with Submission that it seemed very unreasonable to press men to Serve on a private Interest.”¹³ Far more than Captain Short, the governor had “used his power to make a prey” of sailors. From the elites examining the case to the calculating merchants to the constables impressing the sailors to exploited seafarers themselves, everyone understood that the governor’s actions broke the rules regarding maritime labor, and if the governor could break the rules why not the Royal Navy, privateers, or the merchant community?

¹² Depositions of Nathaniel Oliver, Constables John Coomes, William Everden, William Paine, and William Snowton, Mass. Arch., 61: 465, 467, and 485.

¹³ Deposition of William Snowton and Nathaniel Oliver, Mass. Arch., 61: 465 and 485.

Thomas Gilbert of the *Swan* learned valuable lessons under Phips's tutelage. In November 1693, Gilbert, once again employed by Boston merchant Andrew Belcher, boarded the H.M.S. *Conception* seeking men for his West Indies trading voyage. The *Conception's* captain, John Anderson, knew the game, offering the services of Joseph Sibley, an illegally impressed, married Salem fisherman. Sibley declared to Gilbert "that he was no Seaman" but the captain replied "that he carried men to Sea that never were at Sea before and he [Sibley] would doe well enough." Sibley continued his protests but Anderson threatened to "chaine him to the deck" all winter, "breake his head," and "hoist him out with the Tackle." Sibley was then "carried aboard the Ship *Swan* in Capt. Gilbert's Boat" and the West Indies voyage resumed. Sibley was yet another forcibly internationalized seafarer.¹⁴

Sibley's wife, Susanna, discovered his unhappy fate six days later when fellow fishermen George and Henry Harvey escaped their captivity on the *Conception*. The news was devastating. Gilbert had torn Sibley from his "four Small Children" and left Susanna "bereaved of her husband." He had done so not for the protection of the English Empire but rather for the profits of Boston merchants. New England maritime families had just recently become acquainted with the terror of large-scale naval impressment but now they faced the same threat from their own. All knew Gilbert's and Anderson's actions "to be contrary to the just liberties of the Subject [Sibley] granted by their most Gracious Majesties and the laws of this province." The family was left "in a miserable ... distressed condition," compelling Susanna to petition Governor Phips to "have satisfaction for this great Injury."¹⁵ Sibley's fate is unknown but based on Phips's past it is doubtful the fisherman or his family received justice. Phips was removed from power in 1694 but

¹⁴ Depositions of George and Henry Harvey, November 28, 1693, Mass. Arch., 61: 415.

¹⁵ Petition of Susanna Sibley, November 28, 1693, Mass. Arch., 61: 414.

his handling of Boston's seafaring men left a lasting impression on both the mercantile and maritime communities.

The impressment of sailors in Boston once again became the prerogative of the Royal Navy under Phips's replacement, William Stoughton. The new governor attempted to reduce the impressment irregularities under Phips. He ordered Royal Navy captains to employ only "some careful diligent officer" to impress men and warned them not to "demand or receive any money, gratuity, reward or other consideration whatsoever for the spareing exchanging or discharging any person or persons impressed." He also reminded captains to make sure any homeward bound vessels had "a sufficient number [of sailors] be left on board" to bring "them safe into Harbour." His instructions, however, had no power behind them. Stoughton had a vastly different background than the seafaring Governor Phips, who demanded respect through force and violence. He had trained as a minister at Harvard and Oxford and spent a number of years preaching in England. Upon his return to New England in 1662, Stoughton became a lifelong and successful politician, managing to wheedle his way into all the various Massachusetts governments, including the Andros administration. He therefore approached Royal Navy captains, the problem of impressment, and the maritime world with a degree of naiveté, which savvy captains fully exploited.¹⁶

Stoughton tried to manage the escalating conflict over maritime labor between local merchants, ship captains, and the Royal Navy just as England had committed to bolstering New England's defense against the French and providing a means to protect the Mast Fleets. From early 1696 through the remainder of the war, at least three rated Royal Navy frigates were

¹⁶ William Stoughton to Captain Fleetwood Emes, June 4, 1695, Mass. Arch., 62: 21; On Stoughton see, Ricahrd S. Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company INC., 1962), 264.

stationed in Boston. These ships needed a total of 515 men to have full complements – an ambition Royal Navy officers aggressively pursued but rarely met during wartime. Boston additionally maintained a ship of thirty-six guns, a fire ship, and the *Province Galley*, commanded by the Bostonian Cyprian Southack. Stoughton also had to consider the needs of Boston’s merchant fleet, which required at least another 1,000 men to man, to safeguard the port’s economy.¹⁷ With so many elites clamoring for maritime labor, Stoughton came to consider most seafarers as numbers to fill quotas.

The state of Boston’s maritime labor market was especially tight during the winter and spring of 1697. Captain Robert Hancock and the fourth rate H.M.S. *Falkland* with a crew requirement of 260 men had just arrived on the New England coast following a deadly, storm-filled voyage. After settling the ship at Newport, Hancock informed Stoughton that the crew and the ship were “in very bad condition having buried Twenty Men since I came into the Country and now fifty sick and lame.” He asked permission to sail to Boston in order to fill his complement of men and repair his ship. Stoughton, however, told Hancock to remain in Rhode Island because he had a better “opportunity to make good your complement of men, Seamen much resorting thither of late to avoid his Majesties Service, it will be more difficult to be supplied here.” Stoughton had strategically considered Hancock’s request, and his final analysis brought him to the conclusion that Boston’s merchant community could not sustain another Royal Navy vessel, especially not one that needed to impress forty men like the *Falkland*. The governor had little sympathy for the seafarers fleeing to Rhode Island to avoid press gangs because they had already harmed Boston’s shipping, even as they hurt the Royal Navy prospects

¹⁷ Phillip Haffenden, *New England in the English Nation, 1689-1713* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 97; For merchant fleet see, Curtis P. Nettels, *The Money Supply of the American Colonies before 1720* (1934: reprint, New York: A.M. Kelley, 1964), 102.

to fill their crews. Keeping Hancock in Rhode Island would help alleviate Boston's merchants and deter seafarers from fleeing to Rhode Island.¹⁸

Royal Navy captains and the press gangs in Boston, meanwhile, ignored Stoughton's directives and impressed men with impunity. In March of 1697, Stoughton wrote to Captain James Jesson of the H.M.S. *Orford*, complaining about the "great irregularities and disorders committed by your officers and company in the execution of the impress warrant lately granted you." Jesson had seized men on shore "to the very great disturbance of his Majesties Subjects" and interfered with Boston's extensive coasting trade, which brought necessary provisions and supplies into the town. Stoughton had frequently spoken to Jesson about the matter but, like so many officers in the colonies, Jesson disregarded the authority of the governor. Stoughton demanded Jesson release these useful and essential men but he clearly lacked the ability and wherewithal to challenge the Royal Navy captain. Three weeks later, Jesson again angered Stoughton by impressing the mate and boatswain of the ship *Blessing*, creating unnecessary delays for a ship that was already "laden & cleared outward for Barbados." More importantly, the impressment of mates was illegal under English law, and therefore another brazen violation of Stoughton's orders regarding impressment.¹⁹

Captain William Kiggings of the H.M.S. *Arundel* also provoked the ire of the acting governor during the spring of 1697. Stoughton commanded Kiggings to cruise the New England coast to deter French privateers. The captain, however, refused on the grounds that he did not have enough men. Stoughton had a hard time believing Kiggings because of the large scale impressment taking place in Boston. He skeptically noted, "I suppose the number [of sailors] is

¹⁸ Robert Hancock to William Stoughton, February 5, 1697, William Stoughton to Robert Hancock, February 15, 1697, and Robert Hancock to William Stoughton, April 6, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 135-136 and 144.

¹⁹ William Stoughton to Captain James Jesson, March 26, 1697 and April 17, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 143 and 148.

not since diminished but rather increased, tho' you now represent them to be much shrunk of what they were in Winter." Kiggings may not have been lying. His crew may have suffered serious losses by death and desertion during the course of the winter. In response to the governor's criticisms, Kiggings expanded his impressment efforts. In so doing, they ensnared Samuel Thaxter from Hingham who "never was in any sort belonging to the Sea" and had been summoned to Boston to serve as a juryman on the Superior Court of Judicature. Stoughton was furious and demanded his release numerous times for over a week. He personalized the seizure of Thaxter, which, "looks too like an intent to put contempt on me and the power that his Majesty hath vested in me, which I will by the help of God in no way suffer from any person whatsoever." He demanded Kiggings and his officers come ashore and answer for his men's actions and his own delay in releasing Thaxter, who had subsequently missed his jury duty.²⁰

The contrast in Stoughton's language and action vis-à-vis other impressment cases are striking. Irregularities involving seafaring men received minor rebukes but when a respected landsman was captured, Stoughton brought down the full force of his authority. Stoughton was not opposed to impressment. In his letter of April 19, 1697, the governor actively encouraged Kiggings to have his ship sit at the mouth of Boston's harbor and seize sailors from incoming ships. He even berated Kiggings for not impressing more men from the locally-owned ship, *St. William*, commanded by the Marblehead ship captain Aaron Beale. This would have been possible had Kiggings followed Stoughton's advice to monitor the mouth of Boston's harbor. Stoughton further assured Kiggings that "I shall not be wanting in utmost Endeavours by all proper methods to make up the complement of men appointed to be borne on board both his Majesties sd Ships." In other words, as long as Kiggings, Jesson, and Hancock impressed only

²⁰ William Kiggings to William Stoughton, April 19, 1697 and William Stoughton to William Kiggings, April 19, 1697 and April 27, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 149-150 and 152.

common sailors, preferably foreigners but locals, too, if necessary, then Stoughton would support their efforts with the full weight of the law.²¹

Massachusetts did not exempt local seafarers from impressment. Stoughton regularly aided and abetted naval commanders and their efforts to impress men he considered dispensable. He had no tolerance for common men deserting the Royal Navy, regardless of origin. If men were to be released, it would be by his order alone. For instance, in July of 1697, Hancock wrote to Stoughton to complain that four Massachusetts men, two from Boston, had “Swam from his Majesties Shipp *Falkland*,” disappearing into the New Hampshire woods. Two of the deserters were quickly retaken in Piscataqua. Stoughton sympathized with Hancock and wrote warrants to apprehend the other two who “were in these parts [Boston].” Hancock proceeded to impress two Piscataqua men “in the room of Smith & Johnson [the deserters]” without permission from Stoughton. When it came to seafarers and impressment, local authority mattered little because most Royal Navy commanders believed they had a right to the labor and lives of all English seafaring men.²²

Sailors, however, hated impressment and went to great lengths to avoid capture. At sea, they hid with the cargo, presented press gangs with bribes and fake exemption passes, or declared themselves underage. If all else failed, at times seafarers would attempt to dissuade press gangs through physical violence. On shore, sailors, sometimes with local aid, fled inland, dressed as women or in other ingenious disguises, and formed mobs to threaten press gangs. As Denver Brunsman notes, it was common for sailors to desert within the first year of being impressed; they were even more likely to jump ship when they still had the ability to return

²¹ Lieutenant Governor Stoughton to William Kiggings, April 19, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 150.

²² Robert Hancock to William Stoughton, July 12, 1697 and William Stoughton to Robert Hancock, July 22, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 197-199.

home.²³ Without the support of Stoughton and the local government, Boston's common seafarers had to fend for themselves during the 1690s. As previously mentioned, many fled to Rhode Island. Those who remained in Boston relied on other forms of resistance to hinder the efforts of Jesson, Higgings, and Hancock, including violence.

Higgings's particularly aggressive impressment schemes on both land and sea brought forth equally aggressive resistance. When called before Stoughton to answer for the impressment of Samuel Thaxter, he noted that his doctor was "not in a condition to appear" because "he is soe beaten & bruised by the people on shoare" who feared impressment. He also complained of mistreatment at the hands of Captain Abraham Hill at sea: "he purposefully run me on board in the midShip with a stout gale of wind & twas through the providence of God he had not drowned me & my boates crew." Hill and his crew then sailed away from the furious captain, in spite of calls to "putt his Helm on Starboard" so that Higgings and his press gang could board. This may have been Higgings's response to Stoughton's suggestion to focus his impressment efforts on incoming vessels.²⁴

Captain Robert Hancock's press gang from the H.M.S. *Falkland* also experienced resistance and challenges to their authority even though they consented to Stoughton's directive to search incoming vessels only. Hancock employed a pinnace under the command of Lieutenant James Dunbarr to search newly arrived vessels for men. The West Indies fleet typically arrived in late May and early June, providing ample opportunity to impress men. Late spring also brought numerous provision and coasting vessels from the Carolinas and Chesapeake into Boston. These vessels "of considerable import and value" were convoyed into Boston by

²³ Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity*, 191 and 202-203.

²⁴ William Kiggings to William Stoughton, April 30, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 153.

Cyprian Southack and the government-owned *Province Galley*. Consequently, all the seafarers in the convoy had protection from press gangs. Nevertheless, on May 19, 1697, Hancock's press gang challenged the men of the *Province Galley*, firing shots at the Galley's pinnace. The press gang then attacked "with cutlashes [sic] and other weapons assaulted, wounded, and evilly mistreated the Lieut. of the Galley and his company." The record is unclear whether Hancock's men impressed any of the *Province Galley* or provision fleet's men but shortly thereafter the governor ordered Hancock to provide him with a list of the men he had impressed. Over a two-week span from May 17, 1697 to June 1, 1697, Hancock's press gangs had successfully captured twenty-four men, including local men who later deserted. Even if Hancock had impressed men Stoughton deemed off limits, the ambiguity regarding impressment in the colonies would have allowed Hancock to keep the sailors.²⁵

In September of 1697, orders arrived from London that supposedly resolved Stoughton's and other colonial governor's impressment woes. Throughout the 1690s, complaints had poured into Parliament from the West Indies that Royal Navy commanders and their impressment practices were destroying local economies and trade by scaring away sailors and laying up ships. In Barbados, the assembly blamed "the pressing and ill-using of the seamen" for "the decay of the Island's trade proceeds." In Jamaica, the merchants wrote Whitehall to suggest that "men-of-war ... be strictly ordered to press no men at or near the Island, for by pressing the seamen they disable the ships, which has been the ruin of many of them, some being eaten by the worm from long lying, while those that adventured home half-manned have been lost from want of hands." Parliament saw the damage to the West Indies trade as completely unacceptable. It concluded that the only way to control Royal Navy commanders was to place the "sole power of impressing

²⁵ William Stoughton to Robert Hancock, May 19, 1697 and List of Men's Names Prest on Board his Majesties Ship *Falkland*, June 1, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 166 and 170.

seamen in the Colonies” into the hands of the governors. Stoughton was elated to receive the news, writing London, “Your orders for placing the Captains of the King’s ships sent to the Colonies under the direction of the Governors and for regulating impressment were very acceptable to us here, who have heretofore been much harassed and oppressed by some of the Commanders.” He then taunted Royal Navy commanders with his newly acquired authority, berating Captain Hancock in October, “And I [find it] somewhat strange that my Advice is now become of any Esteem and seems so necessary unto you whereas hitherto since your coming to this Country in so many things for his Majesties Service you have slighted and disregarded it, and Expressed yourself unto several Gentlemen that you were not under my direction.” He believed, wrongly, that Royal Navy commanders would obediently relinquish their control over impressment.²⁶

Royal Navy captains, press gangs, and sailors had little patience for politics or waiting on impressment warrants. They acted with an urgency bred by a life at sea. This was especially true for ships and men intending to return home to England. We have seen the lengths that both the officers and men of the *Rose* went to in 1689 in order to return to England. In late May of 1698, after a long voyage protecting Boston’s West Indies salt fleet, Captain Kiggings of the *Arundel* had orders to return to England and only waited “for want of men.” He ignored the king’s order and began impressing men from inward bound vessels without a warrant from Stoughton. He apparently managed to take quite a few men before seizing the Boston-based brigantine, *Friendship*, returning from London. He impressed four men, “all which are Inhabitants of this Province and most of them having Wives & Families here.” The captain of the *Friendship*

²⁶ Minutes of Council of Barbados, January 29, 1696, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 2251; Proposals of the Jamaica Merchants for the better carrying on and securing of that trade, September 18, 1696, Order of the King in Council, December 3, 1696, and Lieutenant Governor Stoughton to Council of Trade and Plantations, September 30, 1697, *CSPC*, vol. 15 (1696-1697), nos. 233, 455, and 1354; William Stoughton to Robert Hancock, October 13, 1697, *Mass. Arch.*, 62: 212.

immediately complained to Stoughton whereupon the governor wrote two scathing letters to Kiggings to halt his “high Contempt of his Majesties Royal authority,” release all the men he had seized without warrant, and attend him in Boston. Stoughton further ordered that “Hereof you may not saile as you will answer your neglect.” If Kiggings had hoped to quickly and quietly sail away after impressing men without a warrant, he was sadly mistaken. Stoughton, meanwhile, expressed concern for the impressment of local men but objected far more to Kiggings’s continued disregard for his authority. In the minds of colonial governors and Royal Navy captains, sailors served as pawns to measure power-relations.²⁷

Another, more dramatic, battle occurred during the summer of 1702, just as news of Queen Anne’s War arrived in Boston. Like Captain Higgings, Captain Robert Jackson of the Royal Navy sloop, *Swift*, had orders to return home but lacked the men. He subsequently impressed so many men from a few Boston merchant vessels that he “left not so much as one person,” and he did so “without having made application for any order or warrant.” The acting governor, Thomas Povey, ordered Jackson to return the men to their ships. Unlike Higgings, Jackson ignored his superior’s command and attempted to sail away. Povey commanded the soldiers on Castle Island to fire on the ship, which resulted in the death of one man and the wounding of five others. Jackson was irate and once back in the harbor he supposedly said to Povey, “You are the murderer.”

This was indeed an odd state of affairs. On one hand, Jackson began the crisis by stripping the freedom of sailors as they worked on board their vessels in the port of Boston. Povey, on the other hand, felt compelled to defend his honor by threatening the lives of those

²⁷ For Kiggings orders to protect the West Indies fleet see, William Stoughton to William Kiggings, November 20, 1697. For Stoughton’s angry rebuke of Kiggings for impressing without permission see, William Stoughton to William Kiggings, June 1, 1698 and William Stoughton to William Kiggings, June 2, 1698, all in Mass. Arch., 62:229 and 251-252.

impressed men. In further justifying his deadly assault on the *Swift*'s sailors, the acting governor declared his true intent, "I thought it my duty to give relief to the merchants in that matter." Mercantile prerogatives of sailing schedules and trading goods, therefore, took precedence over the very lives of maritime laborers. The impressed sailors must have felt comforted by the concern shown by their supposed leaders and employers as the cannon balls fell on their vessel. Considering the small crew size of the *Swift* and the scale of impressment in Boston, it is quite possible that the man murdered "to give relief to the merchants" had been one of the men impressed by Jackson. Those odds only increased for the five injured men. The hero of the fiasco was the mate of the *Swift*, Edward Storey, who acted sensibly and "without any order" to anchor the sloop before more shots were fired from the Castle.²⁸

Historian Denver Brunsman, notes, "American colonial elites had long shown that they did not object so much to impressment as to their inability to control it." Brunsman, however, also argued that Boston had a culture of impressment that protected its local seafarers because it "was loathe to sacrifice its young, part-time seafarers to naval service." Phips, Stoughton, and Povey exemplified Brunsman's assessment of colonial elite attitude towards impressment but each man had various, and overlapping, reasons for their desire to halt or hinder the impressment efforts of Royal Navy press gangs. Phips saw them as outright competition for the maritime labor he required for clandestine privateering missions. Stoughton firmly believed in following the rules of impressment and respect for the chain of command. He desired to protect Boston's coasting trade and any groups exempt from impressment but refused to guard common seafarers from impressment until Royal Navy officers broke the new rules established by the King in late 1697. Like Stoughton, Povey demanded respect and obedience from Royal Navy officers. He

²⁸ Thomas Povey to The Council of Trade, July 20, 1702, *CSPC*, vol. 20 (1702), nos. 768-768xix.

also strongly attended to the interests of Boston's transatlantic commercial elite, not hesitating to put the lives of seafaring men at risk. Under all three governors, the general welfare of common seafarers, regardless of age or origin, collapsed before personal, local, or imperial needs for maritime labor. The fictitious notion that Boston political or mercantile elites were "loathe to sacrifice" local sailors lasted only until merchants managed to outfit and man their vessels to send them forth into the Atlantic.²⁹

Heavy impressment in Boston and around the Atlantic during the 1690s caused Massachusetts sailors, particularly those of Boston, to lose local connections and change culturally as they spent years away from home. The self-interest of merchants seeking to fill crews pressured governors to act on the behalf of some sailors, such as the three men Stoughton ordered Captain Jesson of the *Orford* in September of 1697 to release so a merchant could have his vessel continue its outward bound voyage, but the vast majority of pressed men entered long-term service in the Royal Navy. Furthermore, once vessels departed Boston, sailors had to rely on the ship captain or their own instincts to stave off press gangs. The many who failed also became unmoored from their local community.³⁰

After the conclusion of King William's War in September of 1697, Sir Henry Ashurst, Massachusetts's agent in London, was asked by the Council of Trade if discharged soldiers would find welcome in New England. He answered in the affirmative, surmising from observation that impressment had taken its toll on Massachusetts's male population:

Many ships have been built and manned of late years in New England, which has drained the country of men, for, having no sea-commanders nor seamen in proportion to their

²⁹ Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity*, 129 and 222.

³⁰ William Stoughton to James Jesson, September 16, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 203.

shipping, they have been forced to take land-men. On their arrival here both the one and the other were pressed into the King's service, which prevented them from returning.³¹

In the late 1740s, an anonymous Bostonian, perhaps Samuel Adams, upheld Ashurst's assessment of the impact of impressment on Boston seafarers, noting, "when the inhabitants of the Plantations, are impress'd on board the King's Ships, and carried away from their Families, and Friends, there is scarcely, One in a Hundred ever returns." He also confirmed the dangers of England to local seamen, arguing that new ships in Boston sold to England are "chiefly navigated by Seamen of our own breeding" but "very few of whom, escape being impress'd as soon as they arrive Europe."³²

Boston seafarers bore the brunt of these losses, as its trade with England and the West Indies far exceeded other North American port cities during the late seventeenth century. Plus, Boston relied heavily on ships, pinks, or brigs with larger crews, rather than smaller sloops or ketches, for its transatlantic trade. Press gangs targeted these larger vessels because larger crew sizes made their jobs easier and, oftentimes, smaller vessels were considered coasters, regardless of their trade circuit. As Jeremiah Dummer noted in 1721, "*New-England* is a good Nursery of Seamen for the Navy. I believe I may affirm, that there was hardly a Ship, during the last War [Queen Anne's War], in the Royal Navy without some of their Sailors on Board." Dummer hinted that this arrangement benefitted the Royal Navy but that New England suffered as a consequence. He observed that the Royal Navy's advantage, likely impressment, in competing for local sailors "so distress'd the *New England* merchants, that they were oblig'd to man their Ships with *Indians* and *Negroes*."³³

³¹ Sir Henry Ashurst to Council of Trade and Plantations, October 29, 1697, *CSPC*, vol. 16 (1697-1698), no. 7.

³² Anonymous [Samuel Adams?], *An Address to the Inhabitants of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay* (Boston, 1747), 5 and 7.

³³ Jeremiah Dummer, *A Defence of the New-England Charters* (London: W. Wilkins, 1721), 12.

We cannot know exactly how many Boston seafarers were impressed into the Royal Navy during King William's and Queen Anne's War but a careful look at the few completed portledge bills and shipping papers remaining for the period suggest impressment probably had a negative impact on most voyages and crews. It is important to note that in 1708 Parliament issued the Sixth of Anne, which banned impressment in colonial waters and ports, drastically decreasing the likelihood of impressment for Boston sailors. I have therefore only considered nine portledge bills and the letterbook of John Foye with corresponding shipping papers and accounts for the period 1692 to 1708. Four of these ten vessels experienced direct impressment of its sailors, described either in the portledge bills, letters to employers, or shipping accounts. Meanwhile, the ship *Hopewell* (1693-1694) lost Thomas Norcott in Antigua and failed to pay his full wages but noted that they were still owed. Norcott likely had been pressed into the Royal Navy because it was one of the few reasons merchants were still obligated to pay wages after the disappearance of a sailor. If he had been discharged due to illness or agreement with the captain his wages would have been paid in full at Antigua. If he deserted or failed to show when the ship sailed his wages would have been forfeit. A similar situation occurred for two sailors serving on board the pink *Richard*.³⁴

Short, direct voyages to the West Indies and back to Boston lessened the likelihood of impressment or desertion for a few obvious reasons. First, turnover in the West Indies could be completed swiftly, especially if merchant partners made arrangements in advance, supplied provisions in Boston for the entire voyage, and the vessel escaped major damage en route. Second, ship captains in the West Indies frequently joined Royal Navy convoys returning to

³⁴ Based on portledge bills and shipping papers in Account book of John Foye, Mss C 5037, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, New England Historic Genealogical Society (hereafter cited as NEHGS); Mass. Arch., 62:51; Ships' Papers, Jeffries Family Papers, box 15, vol. 16 and boxes 17 and 18, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter cited as MHS).

England, exposing their men to the dangers of impressment but protecting the goods of the merchants. The 1705-1706 voyage of the *Unity* and the 1706-1707 voyage of the *Society* experienced no impressment or desertion and lasted roughly five and three months respectively. Similarly, the voyage of John Foye from Boston to Jamaica to Boston in 1694-1695 lasted four months and the entire large crew of thirty men safely returned to Boston. Foye's voyage is also noteworthy because he brought his son, John Foye Junior, and likely another relative, Benjamin Foye, suggesting he knew this shorter voyage would not be as difficult or dangerous as his 1692-1694 voyage. Sailors, too, knew shorter and less complex voyages bettered their chances of a safe voyage and return. As we will see in Chapter 4, Ned Low, prior to becoming pirate, decided to switch vessels to avoid a complicated voyage that may have hindered his chances of returning to Boston and marrying his future wife. Low's voyage in 1712 lasted just four and half months, went from Boston to the West Indies and back to Boston, and safely returned the entire crew.³⁵

London press gangs during wartime terrified Boston sailors and sent them scurrying for safety, even if that meant deserting the voyage. According to Daniel Vickers, Barry Levy, and Denver Brunzman, desertion on Boston-owned ships should have been minimal at best, as the local, young, and part-time seafarers happily completed full voyages so they could maintain their reputations and return home. Tables 3 and 4 in the appendix underscore the low retention rates of sailors on Boston-based ships and sloops, suggesting that Boston had a highly mobile maritime community. Sailors, regardless of origin, had to look after their own interests. Many voyages experienced desertion right before sailing for London where laws governing impressment changed and press gangs had far more authority than in the colonies. For example, the pink

³⁵ Account book of John Foye, Mss C 5037, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS; Ships' Papers, Jeffries Family Papers, box 15, vol. 16 and boxes 17 and 18, MHS. For Low see, Ships' Papers, pink *Francis*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 17, MHS.

Richard (1693-1694) only lost two men to desertion, likely because prior to the 1697 directive placing Royal Navy captains and press gangs under the control of colonial governor impressment practices were similar. During Queen Anne's War, however, the ships *Bifrons* and *Unity* experienced large-scale desertion right before setting sail for London. The *Bifrons* had six men runaway at Barbados, almost a third of the crew. The *Unity*, meanwhile, kept all but one of its crew for a voyage to Kinsale, Ireland where the Royal Navy and press gang presence was low. When it came time to depart for London, however, five men deserted, including three sailors who had served with the *Unity's* captain, John Miles, for at least three years and over the course of multiple voyages.³⁶

Sir Henry Ashurst's perceptive appraisal of the dire state of impressment for New England sailors in England held true for the voyages of John Foye and Elias Hasket. Shortly after Foye's *European* arrived in Bristol from Cadiz in early 1693, press gangs ravenously claimed the lives and labor of seafaring men in the port in what was called "hot press." Foye's entire crew, except for the boatswain, either ran away or fell victim to the press gangs. With his New England crew dispersed, Foye wrote to his employers' merchant partner in London to complain that "here is no keeping of any man nor will any man be Shipt without a protecktion [sic] to Keep the men from the press for they com down into Hungrod and Kingrod [Hung Road and King Road] Everyday & press all that they can find in the ships and likeways a Shoare." For over two months, press gangs thwarted Foye's attempts to return to Boston. Finally, in mid-May of 1693, Foye received an order from the Council in London "for leave to the ship *European* of New England, 200 tons, John Foy master, to proceed to Boston in New England, she being built and

³⁶ See aforementioned Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity*, Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, and Levy, *Town-born*; Appendix, tables 3 and 4; Ships' Papers, pink *Richard* and ship *Unity*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 15, vol. 16 and box 18, MHS.

wholly belonging to inhabitants of Boston.” This order helped protect his crew from impressment, as outward bound ships generally received protections.³⁷

A year later, Elias Hasket’s impressment-plagued voyage aboard the *Prudent Kitty* suffered the loss of six sailors, the entire crew excluding the captain, mate, and a boy, to press gangs in Plymouth, England. Like Foye, Hasket’s experience illustrates that sailors from Boston could no longer be protected from joining the ranks of England’s transatlantic seafaring community. Also like Foye, the voyage completely stalled without enough hands to sail the ship to London. Hasket desperately wrote to London for help but none was forthcoming. After weeks of delay, Hasket successfully completed his voyage to London but then smallpox struck the beleaguered captain and the *Prudent Kitty* was seized by authorities on behalf of the replacement sailors for unpaid wages. The blame for this second disaster rested with Hasket’s employer’s London merchant partner, Stephen Mason, who refused to give Hasket the money to pay off the sailors. Hasket’s voyage, as we shall see, led to lengthy recriminations that suggest Boston merchants cared little about who manned their vessels.³⁸

Indeed, Boston merchants knew sailors dreaded the London voyage. In 1709, the owners of the ship *Neptune* advised to Thomas Holland, previously the captain of the *Bifrons*, to pay “as much wages as you can [in Barbados] with safety that your men don’t run from you” before setting sail for London. The scheme was to hold wages hostage until the voyage to the press gang-ridden metropolis could be completed. Holland knew the dangers of London, purchasing two protections for 10 shillings a piece for favored sailors a year earlier. The portledge bill for

³⁷ Account book of John Foye, Mss C 5037, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS; For Foye’s clearance see, William Shaw ed., *Calendar of Treasury Books, January 1693 to March 1696*, v. *X part I* (London, 1935), 201.

³⁸ Deposition of Timothy Burbank, July 1, 1695, *Prudent Kitty* Portledge Bill, The ship *Prudent Kitty* London Account, and Stephen Mason to Captain Barachiah Arnold, December 25, 1694, Mass. Arch., 62: 39-41, 51, 49, and 16.

Neptune's 1707-1708 voyage from the West Indies to London is not complete but in all likelihood the majority of sailors were impressed. Upon leaving London for Boston, Holland employed the services of crimps, waterfront labor agents, for the "shipping of thirteen Men." Either he discharged his crew in London or lost the majority of his crew to desertion or press gangs seized them. Thirteen outsiders now entered Boston's maritime labor market and those sailors previously employed by Holland either entered London's maritime labor market or the Royal Navy – a far more common occurrence than historians of maritime New England have allowed.³⁹

Impressment in the West Indies never reached the same intensity as in England but prior to 1697 Boston sailors confronted a level of impressment comparable to their homeport. As previously mentioned, West Indies governors saw impressment as a threat equal to or greater than the French enemy. In particular, they worried that impressment would scare away the vessels from North America. In late 1693, the governor of Jamaica sent forth desperate pleas for sailors but they would "not come for fear of being pressed." More importantly, "No vessels will come from North America for the same reason." Three years later, Jamaican agents in London continued to petition "that the men-of-war be ordered not to bring off debtors, nor to impress freehold inhabitants nor seafaring men from the provision-ships from North America." Terrified West Indies merchants protested that "The dearness of such provisions as used to be brought from New York and New England is caused by the pressing of seamen from the ships that bring them." This calamity had the potential to incite "a rebellion of negroes." Whitehall acceded to the demands of the sugar plantations, giving the power of impressment to colonial governors in 1697. This was good news for Boston seafarers and ship captains but the law did nothing to help

³⁹ Owners of *Neptune* to Captain Thomas Holland, March 21, 1709 and *Neptune* Disbursements, July 15, 1708, Jeffries Family Papers, box 18, MHS.

those taken before 1697, and West Indies governors still allowed the Royal Navy to press some seafarers from North American ships.⁴⁰

Elias Hasket's voyage to Barbados in 1694 illustrates the threat impressment posed to Boston's seafarers in the West Indies trade but also hints at the extraordinary lengths seamen and, at times, ship captains went to fight back. Shortly after the *Prudent Kitty* arrived in Barbados, beaten and battered by Atlantic storms, two man-hungry Royal Navy vessels, the H.M.S. *Mermaid* and *Tiger*, began hounding its sailors. The two ships had permission from the governor to seize a staggering sixty-seven seamen from incoming ships but "News that a press was coming leaked out, and in some the ships they found nothing but officers."⁴¹ The *Mermaid's* press gangs struck the *Prudent Kitty's* crew first, snatching Matthew Enderby and creating anxiety among the rest of the seamen. After allowing his sailors to escape into the Barbadian countryside to protect them "from the press," Hasket hired a small boat and crew to chase down the *Mermaid*, presumably to save Enderby. His effort failed, and Enderby became another unwilling victim of England's imperial ambitions. Paradoxically, Hasket utilized slave labor to unload and load the vessel for London in lieu of his hiding sailors. In attempting to challenge one form of coerced labor, the ship captain reinforced a far more pernicious, racially-based system of exploitation.⁴²

Hasket acted rationally in protecting his New England crew from impressment. The Royal Navy's robust presence and disease in Barbados made finding skilled maritime labor during wartime difficult and costly. Hasket still had to sail to London and hiring a new crew

⁴⁰ Lieutenant Governor Sir William Beeston to the Earle of Nottingham, July 28, 1693, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 479; Memorial presented by the Agents for Jamaica, December 7, 1696 and Memorial of several Jamaica Merchants to Council of Trade and Plantations, July 27, 1697, *CSPC*, vol. 15 (1696-1697), nos. 470 and 1207.

⁴¹ Governor Russell to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, August 30, 1694, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 1266.

⁴² *Prudent Kitty* Portledge Bill and *Prudent Kitty* Sundry Disbursements and Charges for fitting out sd. ship from Barbados, Mass. Arch., 62:51 and 53-55.

would cost his employers increased wages. Luck, and his sailors' misfortune and rash behavior, however, did not favor Hasket. Three members of the crew returned from the countryside sick or became sick shortly after returning to their ship. They required immediate attention from doctors and nurses. The sailors expected, as was custom during wartime, to have Hasket pay for their medical expenses. The captain complied with their wishes. Fully loaded and ready to sail, the *Prudent Kitty* only waited on the sick sailors.⁴³

Perhaps sensing easy prey, the press gang from the other Royal Navy ship stationed at Barbados, the *Tiger*, zeroed in on the *Prudent Kitty's* beleaguered sailors. A press gang apprehended George Thomson, who had been sick and had to receive attention from a doctor. Unlike poor Enderby, Hasket successfully managed to clear "Geo. Thomson from the Tyger" by paying two pounds and one shilling. As in Boston, Royal Navy officers were not beyond bribes, especially if the sailor they released was sick. Thomson's reprieve, however, was relatively short-lived, as the Royal Navy caught up with him in Plymouth roughly two months later. Shortly after seizing Thomson, the *Tiger's* press gangs used their pinnace to board the *Prudent Kitty*. John Armitage, the *Prudent Kitty's* chief mate, jumped to the defense of his crewmates. He single-handedly "abused and beat" several of the press gang and "threw" the coxswain overboard. Armitage had, at least momentarily, successfully protected his crewmates from forced servitude.⁴⁴

Considered skilled and essential to voyages, mates like Armitage were strictly protected by English law from impressment. In protecting his fellow seafarers, Armitage likely knew he potentially faced punishment but also felt secure that he could not be impressed. When word of

⁴³ *Prudent Kitty* Sundry Disbursements and Charges for fitting out sd. Ship from Barbados, Mass. Arch., 62: 53-55.

⁴⁴ *Prudent Kitty* Portledge Bill, *Prudent Kitty* Sundry Disbursements and Charges for fitting out sd. Ship from Barbados, Deposition of Timothy Burbank, July 1, 1695, Mass. Arch., 62: 51, 53-55, and 39-41.

Armitage's action reached the captain of the *Tiger*, he ordered the chief mate to attend him. Armitage swiftly obeyed and upon his arrival confessed to resisting the press gang. The captain had Armitage "whipt several lashes." But then he vindictively and illegally impressed the chief mate. Despite supposed state protections, Royal Navy captains consistently operated in colonial waters with impunity. Hasket petitioned the *Tiger's* captain to obtain Armitage's release but was adamantly denied. To placate Hasket and perhaps obtain a promise to not press charges in London, the Royal Navy captain released another skilled seaman to replace Armitage. The *Tiger's* press gang still was not finished with the *Prudent Kitty's* crew. Just prior to setting sail, the gang poached another of Hasket's sailors, Wesley Perkins, who, after receiving some of his pay, went ashore to find "a whore" but instead landed a berth in the Royal Navy. Hasket had no sympathy for this reckless seafarer, leaving him to serve his time.⁴⁵

We do not know what became of Enderby, Armitage, or Perkins but impressment and desertion could lead New England sailors down dangerous, even deadly paths. As some historians have noted, a ship became a floating incarnation of the homeport when it set sail. For the sailors on board, the ship provided a thin, comforting tendril, linking them back to their family, friends, and community in an otherwise watery and hostile world. Impressment broke that connection, and as Sir Henry Ashurst noted, it frequently "prevented them from returning."⁴⁶

The story of one nameless New England sailor demonstrates the harrowing experience of losing that connection. This particular young man fled to sea from his father in 1707, "*ingulfing himself into the Temptations of a Wicked World.*" Upon arriving in Jamaica, "he was soon

⁴⁵ Deposition of Timothy Burbank, July 1, 1695, Mass. Arch., 62: 39-41; For chief mate exemption status see, Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity*, 65.

⁴⁶ For the ship's connection to home see, Lauren Benton, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47 (2005): 700-24; Sir Henry Ashurst to Council of Trade and Plantations, October 29, 1697, *CSPC*, vol. 16 (1697-1698), no. 7.

pressed aboard a *Man of War*; from whence after diverse Months of *Hard Service*, he obtained a release, tho' with the Loss of all the Little he had." Impoverished and displaced by his forced time in the Royal Navy, the seafarer jumped at his first opportunity for employment. He joined a privateer but, after a few naval engagements, was taken captive by the French, along with fifteen other English privateers. Soon thereafter, the French commander, rather than taking them to a French prison, released them ashore in the Bay of Honduras. In the Bay, "Spanish Indians" fell upon the hapless New Englander and his compatriots and, "Having their Hands now tied behind them, and Ropes about their Necks," they were led 600 miles inland, toward the dreaded Spanish mines. The New England seafarer was spared the mines but the Spanish imprisoned him for over eight months, during which time he suffered from malnutrition and small pox.⁴⁷

Incarceration during wartime was a fact of life for many seafaring men in the West Indies. Even when at peace, seafarers from Boston frequently fell afoul of the Spanish in the Bays of Campeche and Honduras and Saltertuda when exploiting those lands for logwood and salt. They could lose months or years of their lives attempting to obtain a release, and getting home once free could be an equally difficult task. For this young man, release meant months of travelling to the coast where he was put on board a Spanish galleon. He then had to wait "till the Plate fleet went home" to Cadiz. Left to his own devices upon arrival to Cadiz, the New England seafarer found passage to Portugal where it would have been possible to find a New England vessel. With the help of strangers, including a Boston man, the travails of this seafaring man

⁴⁷ For the story of this New England seafarer see, Cotton Mather, *Repeated Warnings: Another Essay to Warn Young People against Rebellions that must be Repented of* (Boston, 1712), 27-33. Other New England sailors and fishermen had similar remarkable and harrowing stories after being forced or choosing to leave the vessel connecting them to their homeport see, the story of Philip Ashton (impressed by pirates) in John Barnard, *Ashton's Memorial: An History of the Strange Adventures and Signal Deliverances of Mr. Philip Ashton* (Boston: Samuel Gerrish, 1725) and Ashley Bowen (deserted) in Philip Chadwick Foster Smith, ed., *The Journals of Ashley Bowen (1728-1813) of Marblehead*, 2 vols., *Collections*, (Boston: Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1973), 1:24-27.

came to an end roughly three and half years after the Royal Navy impressed him that fateful day in Jamaica.⁴⁸

The demand for maritime labor, and the difficulties ship captains confronted to keep that labor once obtained, during wartime increased the bargaining position of all seafaring men. Most seafarers were not shy about pressing their advantage. They knew their wages during peacetime did not constitute an honest wage. According to Marcus Rediker, English sailors only received an average peacetime monthly wage of £1.46 whereas during wartime a sailor could expect an average monthly wage of £2.20. Boston seafarers during King William's War earned even higher wartime wages, averaging £2.78 per month. In comparison, sailors on board the Boston-owned *Dolphin* in 1686 averaged a mere £1.42 per month, or roughly fifty-percent less. Higher wages could put a serious dent in merchants' profits but typically increased shipping costs were transferred to buyers and consumers through higher commodity prices.⁴⁹

Sailors also bargained for increased advance wages, clothing, or cargo space, protection from impressment, and medical attention when sick. Elias Hasket's experience with his sailors in Barbados exemplifies the agency sailors had in demanding these perquisites. John Foye complained bitterly that the advanced wages of "one and two months pay" demanded by sailors in Bristol would "swell the accompt of the outset." Furthermore, the sailors he met with "ask great wages & greater privilig [sic]." "Privileges" granted sailors space aboard the ship to transport goods on their own account to trade. In a sense they became partial owners in the

⁴⁸ Mather, *Repeated Warnings*, 27-33.

⁴⁹ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, see appendix C, 304-305. Average wages for Boston seafarers during King William's War are based on fifty-one sailors and five voyages see, Ships' Papers, Jeffries Family Papers, box 15, vol.16, MHS; *Prudent Kitty* Portledge Bill, Mass Arch., 62: 51; and Account book of John Foye, Mss C 5037, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS. For the *Dolphin's* wages see, *Dolphin* Portledge Bill, Jeffries Family Papers, box 14, MHS. For increasing prices of commodities during wartime and merchant profiteering see, Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 175-177.

voyage, which generally fostered a more cooperative spirit between the sailors and officers. This practice became increasingly rare on English vessels during the eighteenth century. Foye strategically offered to “give them the more privileg” because he believed “they will be prest when they com to” regardless, and he would therefore lose his investment if he offered to advance wages.⁵⁰ It was customary to give sailors advance wages so they could purchase necessities for the voyage or provide some money to their families.

Some sailors, however, saw in advance wages a great opportunity to get back at greedy merchants and ship captains through their mobility. For instance, in January of 1695, John Walker signed on board the ship *Newcastle* for a voyage from Boston to Barbados to Boston. He received advance wages of a month’s pay at £3 but then “deserted the voyage and left the ship and did not sail with the Company.” The captain of the pink *Richard* (1694-1695) similarly bought a seamen clothes in Antigua but then the man ran “away afterwards.” Wartime demand for maritime labor gave seafarers’ confidence that their deceit and desertion would go unpunished.⁵¹

Impressment drove some sailors to more extreme forms of resistance than tough negotiating and desertion – they became pirates. This was an extraordinary occurrence: wartime, as historian Peter Earle notes, “was usually pirate-free, as former pirates flocked to sign up on legally commissioned privateers.” Sailors, according to the pamphlet *Piracy Destroy’d*, blamed “The hard usage they met with at home during the War, by being press’d, and haled from their Families like Dogs on board Men of War” and “being turned over into other ships” for their piratical turn. These newly created pirates left behind the Europeanized Atlantic and found

⁵⁰ Account book of John Foye, Mss C 5037, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS.

⁵¹ *Newcastle* Portledge Bill and Account of pink *Richard*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 15, vol. 16, MHS; For more on the custom of advance pay see Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, 143-144.

refuge in the Indian Ocean with its rich, relatively unguarded, Mughal and European prizes. Jamaican Governor Sir William Beeston also linked Indian Ocean pirates and naval impressment: “the press for the King’s ships frightens away many [sailors], and many go to the Northern Plantations, where the Red Sea pirates take their plunder, are pardoned and fit out for a fresh voyage, which makes all kinds of rogues flock to them.”⁵²

Many Boston seafarers also joined the ranks of the Indian Ocean pirates likely owing to their fear of impressment and poor treatment by elites at home. The Council of Trade confirmed this disturbing trend, noting “we find frequent mention of New England as the place from whence they [Indian Ocean pirates] too generally Spring.” The author of *Piracy Destroy’d* believed merchants could reduce these pirates by hiring ship captains who used “their Men like fellow Christians” because “Seamen being zealous abettors of Liberty, will admit no arbitrary force, and may be easily led, but not drove.” Boston merchants decided on a different course of action – a course that punished “courteous” captains who tried to “gain the affections of their Men.”⁵³

Impressment and competition over maritime labor during King William’s War created a divide between Boston ship captains and their merchant-employers regarding the treatment and privileges of seafarers. Merchants instructed ship captains to complete voyages cheaply and with efficiency. Ship captains, however, required leeway, especially during wartime, in their negotiations with sailors to follow the latter order. With the exception of wages, ship captains and seafarers informally agreed upon any extra perquisites. Ship captains then debited the

⁵² Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003), 113; *Piracy Destroy’d: Or, A Short Discourse Shewing the Rise, Growth and Causes of Piracy of Late; with a Sure Method How to put a Speedy Stop to That Growing Evil* (London, 1701), 3 and 11; Lieutenant-Governor Sir William Beeston to the Earl of Nottingham, July 28, 1693, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 479.

⁵³ For Boston seafarers as Indian Ocean pirates see, Whitehall to Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton, 20 January 1697, *Mass. Arch.*, 62: 154-163, quote at 162; *Piracy Destroy’d*, 12-13.

merchants or ship's account for these added expenses. They hoped their employer/s would either overlook the added expenses, which were trivial to the overall costs and profits of the voyage, or recognize the necessity of maintaining good crew morale to successfully complete a voyage during challenging times. Some Boston merchants, encouraged by their London partners, however, had little tolerance for these gestures of goodwill. They desired to limit seafarers to their, preferably low, wages to maximize their profits and thus increase their remittances to London.⁵⁴

This brewing conflict of interests climaxed in May 1695 when shipping mogul Samuel Lillie hauled Elias Hasket, captain of the ship *Prudent Kitty*, into court for refusing to “render” “a just and true accompt [account]” of his voyage and pay Lillie and his partners their expected profits. But Lillie's true agenda was to punish Hasket for protecting his sailors. Hasket had set sail from Boston for Barbados and then to London in December of 1693 with detailed orders from Lillie to sell the cargo for “good bills of Exchange for London made payable to Mr. Stephen Mason,” Lillie's partner and creditor. He commanded Hasket to refrain from spending any money on victualing or outfitting the ship in Barbados unless absolutely necessary. This was an unusually strict order because ship captains typically obtained fresh food and other supplies in the West Indies, and ships almost always required small repairs. Lillie, however, believed he had sufficiently supplied the *Prudent Kitty* for the entire voyage and submitted his bill for victuals as evidence to the court.⁵⁵

All merchants hoped that voyages would face few obstacles and limited expenditures but reality almost always required flexibility and patience when dealing with the vicissitudes of

⁵⁴ Samuel Lillie versus Elias Hasket (1695), Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas Record Books, 1692-1701 (hereafter cited as SCCCPRB); Stephen Mason to Captain Barachiah Arnold, December 25, 1694, Mass. Arch., 62: 16.

⁵⁵ Samuel Lillie Orders to Elias Hasket, December 6, 1693, Mass. Arch., 61: 422-423.

maritime commerce. Hasket's voyage was no different. Almost immediately his voyage encountered ill-fortune when a storm battered the *Prudent Kitty*, requiring ship repairs in Barbados. The storm also caused considerable damage to the cargo, which meant a smaller remittance to Stephen Mason. We have seen the litany of other problems Hasket's voyage faced due to impressment and disease. Despite these difficulties, the *Prudent Kitty's* voyage was not a disaster for Lillie. He suffered a small loss in the Barbados leg of the voyage, mostly due to the added expenses due to impressment and disease, but the voyage to London was profitable for him and his merchant partners. Nevertheless, the merchant brought forth a litany of protests against Hasket: the spendthrift captain had hired slaves in Barbados to help unload and load the ship; repaired the vessel in Barbados and London; charged Lillie's account for damaged goods when the sailors "ought to sustain the loss;" kept the sailors in pay after Lillie believed the ship should have been discharged; subtracted "for his own sickness att London of the Small Pox." Lillie's most pressing issue with Hasket, however, was his generosity towards his sailors in Barbados. He prioritized recouping the £33:7:6 spent on doctors and nurses for sick seafarers and Hasket's efforts to protect his sailors from impressment. He also disliked how impressment and demand for maritime labor in Barbados drove up wages in Barbados, a common and necessary practice during wartime.⁵⁶

Lillie's court case against Hasket generated an important discourse in Boston about the responsibilities of merchants and ship captains to their maritime labor force. On one hand, Puritanism demanded a paternalistic relationship between employers and their workers, or, as historian Stephen Innes put it, "the rule of love as well as the rule of law." On the other hand, Puritans considered a covenant or contract sacred. Sailors signed a contract stipulating their

⁵⁶ *Prudent Kitty* Account, 1694, Mass. Arch., 62: 49.

itinerary, wages, and possibly a small share in the cargo – an increasingly rare privilege for those employed in the lower deck. Did merchant employers or ship captains owe them further consideration? Should Bostonians in foreign ports follow Puritan guidelines and protect threatened seafarers from impressment and provide medical care and quality food to those unfortunate enough to become desperately ill while serving the interests of merchants who, to paraphrase the Reverend Cotton Mather, has ventured his estate but not his person?⁵⁷ Or should the written contract take precedence? Lillie and his cohort of allies firmly believed the latter, and hoped to change the rule of custom to the rule of contract when it suited their agenda.⁵⁸

Lillie enlisted Andrew Belcher, Giles Fifield, Barachiah Arnold, and Benjamin Emmes, all prominent ship captains or ex-ship captains connected to the London trade, to testify on his behalf. With the exception of Arnold who also related his experience in London with Hasket, the four deponents focused their testimonies exclusively on supposedly unwarranted perquisites for the seafarers and captain. Arnold began the proceedings on July 2, 1695, arguing,

I have used the West Indies several voyages since the sickness has been there and the Custom to our men is that if any of them be taken sick on board the Ship and they be putt on shoar and be maintained with fresh diet and lookt after by a Doctor or Nurse than the master pays for the same but att pay table it is deducted out of their wages without any objection by them and I farther say that if men desire to go ashore to save themselves from the press or any other danger, for what men are hired to do the work on board in their roome, then they allow it out of their wages, nor I never knew any other custome but the sailors allow for Doctors, Nurses, Dyets etc. as above which I always had allowed to me by them out of their wages.

In a voyage from New London to Barbados to London in 1690, Giles Fifield “never charged anything” to the owners for his seafarers’ sickness or fresh diet ashore even though, he proudly

⁵⁷ Cotton Mather, *The Sailours Companion and Counsellor* (Boston, 1709), 62.

⁵⁸ Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 41; For importance of contracts see, Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), chap. 3; For a good discussion of merchants’ and sailors’ conflicting interpretations of customs and contracts see, Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 150-151.

declared, “I had severall of my men that were Sick and Three dyed.” Belcher and Emmes, meanwhile, reiterated Arnold’s statement although Belcher took the perspective of both an ex-ship captain and a prominent merchant.⁵⁹

None of the deponents favoring Lillie’s side were impartial. Belcher and Fifield had strong ties to Lillie through investments in vessels and transatlantic trade. Lillie employed Arnold and Emmes, and their participation in the London trade placed them one step below merchant status. Like Belcher before them, the two ship captains likely hoped to retire from the sea to join the growing merchant-elite of Boston.⁶⁰ The court clearly knew the bias of these men and called upon ship captains Thomas Gilbert, Stephen Day, Thomas Graffort, and Jacob Green to testify. The court asked one simple question: was “it customary in time of war for Masters of Ship’s to allow the men a Doctor and the owners to pay the Doctor, Provision, & nurses if any be sick.” The four captains replied, “it is of late made a custome upon necessity.” The court also ordered three prominent merchants, Thomas Foxcroft, Nathaniel Oliver, and Timothy Clarke, to examine Hasket’s accounts for inaccuracies. The merchants found the accounts to be “rightly drawne” but refrained from commenting on whether or not the charges were “just,” as “the said order” did not direct them “to give our opinion.” After reviewing the evidence, the jury decided in favor of Hasket, fair treatment of seafarers, and maritime custom.⁶¹

The court’s decision did not negate the fact that Lillie, Mason, and their compatriots won an important victory in their efforts to change Boston’s commercial culture to reflect that of

⁵⁹ Depositions of Barachiah Arnold, July 2, 1695, Andrew Belcher, July 6, 1695, Giles Fifield, July 5, 1695, and Benjamin Emmes, July 4, 1695, Mass Arch., 62: 56, 61-62, and 195.

⁶⁰ For collaboration in building and outfitting ships see, Lloyd Vernon Briggs, *History of Shipbuilding on North River, Plymouth County, Massachusetts* (Boston: Coburn Brothers, 1889), 337.

⁶¹ Testimony of Thomas Gilbert, Stephen Day, Thomas Graffort, and Jacob Green, undated, Mass. Arch., 62: 60; Francis Foxcroft, Nathaniel Oliver, and Timothy Clarke to the Honorable Kings Justices of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas, July 5, 1695, Mass. Arch., 62: 194; Samuel Lillie v. Elias Hasket (1695) SCCCPRB, 1692-1701.

London's. They had successfully made Hasket's life miserable for negotiating with his sailors and considering their well-being when threatened by impressment and disease. In London, Stephen Mason refused to aid Hasket because of the shortfall in remittances, hindering the captain's attempts to finish his voyage and pay his crew. Mason then sent a letter to Barachiah Arnold before he left London for Boston, insinuating that Hasket had financially "abused" Lillie and Mason. He informed Arnold that he had a writ against Hasket and directed him to "assist what you can in getting him [Hasket] on shore & discerning where he is that the writ may take place." Lillie sued Hasket in May of 1695. For the next two months, the peak of Boston's outbound shipping, the lawsuit forced Hasket to remain unemployed while awaiting trial. By this point, Hasket may have regretted his efforts on behalf of his crew. With so many high profile merchants and ship captains involved, details of the case likely spread across the waterfront community. Ship captains now understood that they, too, would face similar treatment from some Boston merchants if they succumbed to the wartime demands of seafarers for protection from impressment and doctors.⁶²

* * *

Impressment in Boston, England, and the West Indies during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries tore many Boston seafarers from the comfort of home, relatives, and friends. They suffered the loss of liberty and great hardships to protect the interests of political and merchant elites in England and at home – an "Evil Necessity" as it has been called. If they made it home at all, these impressed men shared in the common experience of transatlantic seafarers. Some maritime historians have been too quick to overlook the cultural and social

⁶² Stephen Mason to Captain Barachiah Arnold, December 25, 1694, Mass. Arch., 62: 16; Lillie v. Hasket (1695) SCCCPRB, 1692-1701.

ruptures caused by impressment for New England's alleged young and part-time seafarers. More importantly, seafarers in Boston knew that local elites had no qualms with legal impressment or, as was the case of Governor Phips, illegal impressment. Their labor and bodies instead represented a commodity for which the Royal Navy, colonial governors, and merchants competed and used.

Like all Atlantic seafarers, Boston sailors did their utmost to resist impressment and cooperated to turn difficult wartime conditions to their advantage. They fought press gangs ashore and in the harbor of Boston and foreign ports. They sought refuge in nearby Rhode Island. In the West Indies or England, Boston seafarers fled into the countryside and hid. From ship captains and merchants, Boston seafarers negotiated higher wages, medical treatment, and protection from press gangs. They deserted en masse when the prospect of impressment at the end of a voyage increased. Or they deserted to receive higher wages by the run rather than a monthly wage. Some of Boston's most elite merchants countered these costs by harassing ship captains who allowed seafarers increased perquisites during King William's War. Although unsuccessful, these repugnant tactics encouraged ship captains to look after the interests of merchants rather than the interests of their crews.

4.0 BOSTON AND PIRATES

For much of the seventeenth century, pirates and privateers confidently sailed into Boston rich with Spanish or Portuguese gold and silver and found a warm welcome. They outfitted their ships, enlisted additional crew members, sold stolen goods, and rubbed elbows with Boston's political and economic elites. Boston, like many North American and West Indies ports, relied heavily on the pirates' gold and silver. It allowed Boston to escape from a specie-scarce economy and reliance on cash flows from newly arrived immigrants from England. This was especially important during that later half of the seventeenth century when immigration declined drastically. Boston's 1689 revolution, King William's War and the subsequent widespread use of English credit arrangements, the ship outfitting and building industries, expansion of trade routes and shipping, and the wage-based logwood trade, however, transformed the port's relationship with Atlantic and Indian Ocean pirates and privateers. With these major economic, political, and social changes, Boston became the New World's torchbearer of England's strategy to eradicate piracy and limit the opportunities of common seamen.

Historians of piracy have underestimated Boston's importance in producing the emergent capitalist economic system that led to the alienation of seafarers and the eruption of piracy in 1716.¹ Boston, even more than the sugar and tobacco planters of the West Indies and Chesapeake, required stable, predictable trade routes with a docile maritime labor force. Furthermore, Boston had by far the largest merchant fleet in the Americas and had the most to

¹ Hugh Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, INC., 1969); Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986); Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003); Marcus Rediker, *Villains of all Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); Joel Baer, *Pirates* (Great Britain: Tempus, 2007); Colin Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates* (New York: Harcourt, 2007); For a study that focuses on pirates in New England but does not distinguish Boston's unique relationship with pirates and privateers, see, George Francis Dow and John Henry Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast* (1923: reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1996).

lose when pirates began attacking English shipping. Beginning in the mid-1690s, political and religious authorities in the port swiftly moved to prosecute pirates and their benefactors in Boston. By the early 1700s, they sought to capture and hang pirates as a warning to the entire seafaring community. Pirates retaliated by singling out Boston and its vessels out for special vengeance. Indeed, the infamous pirate Ned Low, a direct product of Boston's shipbuilding industry and Boston's Bay of Honduras logwood trade, terrorized the port for two years, hindering trade and greatly damaging the economy. This chapter traces Boston's journey from enthusiastically supporting a lawless Atlantic where English pirates commanded respect to their union with the "forces of law and order."²

* * *

Prior to the 1689 revolution, Boston was a haven for the Atlantic's smugglers and pirates. Bostonians, like most Englishmen at the time, saw pirates and privateers like Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Walter Raleigh, or Henry Morgan as maritime heroes. These men had earned fame, knighthood, and wealth from their daring expeditions against and plunder of the Spanish in the New World. Religious leaders on both sides of the Atlantic sanctified their pillage and plunder, considering them God's Protestant soldiers against Catholic nations in the West Indies and North America. Many English seafarers dreamt of becoming the next Drake or Morgan rather than laboring in the brutal and inglorious conditions on board Royal Navy, East India, Royal African Company, and merchant vessels.³

Seafarers in colonial waters had ample opportunity to escape such exploitative employment by deserting their previous employment or joining in privateering ventures. During

² Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, xi.

³ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, chap. 2; Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, chap. 3.

wartime in the seventeenth century, colonial governors issued privateering commissions to anyone with a vessel promising to attack foreign shipping and willing to pay the governor's fee. This commission, or letter of marque, constituted the primary difference between legal privateering and piracy. Many privateers simply ignored the contents of their commissions, conveniently looting any foreign nation's vessel. Most, however, refused to attack English shipping and remained loyal to their homeland.⁴

The English Parliament, however, began to retreat from its swashbuckling heroes during the 1670s. England stationed warships in the West Indies and Chesapeake to hunt down pirates and privateers, chasing many of them into the lagoons of the Bay of Campeche. The rise of the Atlantic slave trade and English plantations in the West Indies and Chesapeake slowly changed the perspective of the restoration kings and English colonial policymakers. The future, as they began to see it, rested in stable trading lanes, English ships and seafarers, and the exchange of colonial commodities such as, sugar, tobacco, lumber, and fish for English textiles and manufactured goods. The growing merchant-planter class in the West Indies and Chesapeake also clamored for safer seas and a controlled maritime population to transport their goods. In response, parliament passed the Jamaica Act of 1683. This law outlawed trade with pirates and gave colonial governors and the Royal Navy greater incentives to hunt them down. These initial steps began a long campaign to turn colonial land and waters into a vehicle for English expansion and wealth for its political and mercantile elites.⁵

⁴ For desertion as a form of resistance see, Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1987); for privateering see, Carl E. Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), chap. 2.

⁵ For policy shifts in London and rise in plantation slavery see, Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), chap. 1 and Philip Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); for

Boston resisted England's efforts to change the status quo in the Americas. Laws and decrees issued from faraway England had little impact on local sentiment. Many local politicians and religious leaders scoffed at threats from England and its blustering customs agent, Edward Randolph. When the Jamaica Act of 1683 was passed, the town blatantly ignored it, preferring to support the maritime predators that brought gold and silver into the port. In so doing, Boston ironically became a beacon for the Atlantic's motley crew rather than England's Godly Puritans.⁶

English officials in and around Boston desperately cast the wayward port in the worst possible light. During the summer of 1684, Governor Cranfield of New Hampshire wrote to William Blathwayt to complain about Boston's disregard and disdain for the Jamaica Act of 1683. Cranfield noted that Boston had received numerous visits from foreign privateers carrying Spanish gold and silver since the act had passed. Indeed, he argued that without action from England, "Boston would have been a receptacle for all the pirates in these western parts." He desired the King to station a frigate permanently on the New England coast to apprehend these pirates/privateers and confiscate their cargoes. Cranfield regretted that he had no Man of War on hand to sail into Boston and seize the French privateer Michel Andreson, who had been invited by the Massachusetts governor, Simon Bradstreet, to outfit his storm-battered, leaking ship, *La Trampeuse*.⁷

Andreson's arrival in Boston in 1684 set off a political firestorm and involved the port in complex, ambiguous international maritime affairs. Several Spanish prisoners fled the privateer,

passage of the Jamaica Act see, Journal of Lords of Trade and Plantations, February 17, 1683, Public Record Office: *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: America and the West Indies*, 45 vols. (London: Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860-1994), vol. 11 (1681-1685), no. 946 (hereafter cited as *CSPC*).

⁶ For a good overview of the conflict between Boston and England, see, Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (United States of America: Rutgers University Press, 1981), 17-36.

⁷ Governor Cranfield to William Blathwayt, 29 August 1684, and William Dyre to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 12 September 1684, *CSPC*, vol. 11 (1681-1685), nos. 1851 and 1862.

spreading news of its arrival and the wealth taken from Spanish and Dutch ships as far as New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Some reports indicated the ship held over 100,000 pieces of eight. Like Governor Cranfield, Boston's newly appointed customs agent, William Dyre, drooled over the prospect of seizing *La Trampeuse's* cargo. When the ship docked in Boston, he accosted one of the Spanish prisoners, Augustino Gonsalvo, and acquired a written testimony that Andreson had committed piracy in the West Indies. Dyre then seized *La Trampeuse* "as a pyrate, & presented a large libell against said Capt." In so doing, Dyre infuriated local merchants who undoubtedly saw great opportunities for wealth in repairing and supplying the vessel. The prominent Boston merchant, Samuel Shrimpton, threatened to have Dyre's "brains beat out." He also aided Andreson in removing the ship to Noodles Island, "the place and receptacle of all piratical and uncustomed goods," far from the greedy hands of the customs agent. Shrimpton's assistance did not go unrewarded. Andreson gave him gold, silver, jewels, and cacao for his willingness to defy Dyre.⁸

Dyre's contention that Andreson had committed piracy, however, rested on shaky ground. France and Spain were at war and Andreson had a valid French privateering commission, which made Gonsalvo's accusation suspect. Aggrieved parties commonly considered privateers lawless and merciless pirates even though all the maritime nations relied on them to disrupt their enemies' merchant shipping and help pay for the war effort. Dyre therefore accused Andreson and his crew of being Dutch and seizing two Dutch slave ships trading with the Spanish, a clear act of piracy. The customs agent also believed Andreson had stolen two or three hogshead of sugar from English ships he met near Havana. Andreson's exotic

⁸ Deposition of Alonzo Lopez, Suffolk County Supreme Judicial Court Files (hereafter cited as SCSJCF), Massachusetts State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA), case no. 2251; Simon Bradstreet to Edward Randolph, December 8, 1684, Robert Toppan, ed., *Edward Randolph: Including His Letters and Official Papers from the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies in America*, 7 vols. (Boston, 1898), 3:336-340; William Dyre to Sir Leoline Jenkins, September 12, 1684, *CSPC*, vol. 11 (1681-1685), no. 1862.

crew also drew the attention of the customs agent. Dyre sent a list of the 198 man crew to London, which included, he pointedly noted, “French, Scotch, Dutch, English, Spaniards, Portugals, Negroes, Indians, Mullattos, Swedes, Irish, Jersey men, and New Englanders.” Boston’s leading men, however, warmly welcomed this dangerously motley crew for the economic benefits they provided the local community. These worldly privateers also handled Boston’s local legal and religious customs well and thus behaved with dignity while in port. The colonies had far more to fear from England’s beacons of order – the arrogant and unruly officers and crews of the Royal Navy.⁹

To delay Dyre and separate reality from fiction, Boston's Court of Assistants interrogated crew members and three Spanish seafarers/prisoners about Michel Andreson’s actions in the West Indies. The court questioned Augustino Gonsalvo about his written claim that Andreson was a pirate. They asked the basic but difficult question: “What is the difference between a Privateer and a Pirate?” to which the Spanish prisoner this time truthfully replied, “I was never upon any such designs and know not well the difference but have heard say Capt. Michael was a privateer.” Gonsalvo also confessed that his sworn testimony for Dyre had been written for him and that he did not know its contents. The court then asked all deponents if Andreson had fired shots at or stolen any goods from English vessels. They answered the first part of the question in the negative; however, they verified that two hogsheads of sugar came on board *La Trampeuse* from an English ship but failed to speculate on whether or not Andreson paid for the sugar. For his part, Andreson claimed the English captains presented the sugar as a gift after the privateer captain had entertained them. It seems unlikely Andreson would have pirated two hogsheads of

⁹ Deposition of William Dyre, September 15, 1684, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 2251; William Dyre to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 12 September 1684, *CSPC*, vol. 11 (1681-1685), no. 1862.

sugar from the English when he already had legally looted over 100,000 pieces-of-eight from the Spanish and Dutch.¹⁰

The porous line between pirate and privateer enabled men like Andreson to enter Boston and confidently declare himself “innocent of the breach of any of the laws of this place.” His diverse crew had knowledge of the various locations around the Atlantic and his New England crew members undoubtedly informed him of Boston’s open policy towards pirates/privateers. Boston maintained the facilities, materials, and specialists necessary to outfit a badly damaged and large vessel like *La Trampeuse*. They also needed Spanish pieces of eight, which served as the primary means of exchange for the growing port town. Most importantly, Boston, for the moment, retained its independence from a permanently stationed Royal Navy vessel. Unlike Dyre, a Royal Navy ship captain could have seized *La Trampeuse* prior to its docking in Boston. The Royal Navy frigate could have then exerted military pressure on Boston’s merchant community and political leaders – hence, Governor Cranfield’s wistful desire for a stationed frigate in Boston. Happily for Andreson, Dyre lacked authority and Cranfield lacked a frigate. The decision therefore rested in the hands of Boston’s governor and the Court of Assistants. The court saw “no ground to put said Andreson upon trial for Piracy but do allow him liberty to proceed with his business.” Once again, Boston upheld an Atlantic world favorable to free maritime workers rather than accede to customs officials and England’s laws.¹¹

Andreson’s release added to the chorus of complaints from English officials about Boston’s hospitality to pirates, privateers, and smugglers. As Governor Cranfield intimated in his

¹⁰ Depositions of Michel Andreson, David Evans, Charles Fayerweather, Claes Symonson, Alonzo Lopez, Augustino Gonsalvo, and Miguel de la Torre, September 19, 1684, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 2251.

¹¹ Michel Andreson’s Address to Simon Bradstreet and Court of Assistants, September 19, 1684 and the Court’s Judgment, September 25, 1684, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 2251; For more on privateers and pirates in Boston, see, Curtis P. Nettels, *The Money Supply of the American Colonies before 1720* (1934: reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1964) 87-89 and 87n.93.

letter to William Blathwayt, England would no longer tolerate Boston's independent decision-making regarding the Atlantic maritime world. Even before *La Trampeuse* departed, rumors that Boston's beloved Charter of 1629 had been annulled crossed the Atlantic. Reports also indicated that Boston would serve as a way station for frigates travelling to the West Indies and, even more ominously, host one or two Royal Navy frigates. Edward Randolph, Boston's customs agent from 1678-1683, had lobbied Parliament and the King for years to subdue Boston through a show of naval force. He maintained that Bostonians would not submit to English authority "unless they have Some awe upon them," which, he continued, "a first rate frigott or any vessel under his Majesties flag will sufficiently answear." Randolph was therefore delighted to learn in October of 1685 that he would be returning to Boston on board the fifth-rate frigate H.M.S. *Rose Frigate*. He finally had the means to suppress Boston's trade with pirates and smugglers. All annoying complaints from merchants could be silenced with a show of force. The unfortunate customs official failed to realize that the officers and crew on board the H.M.S. *Rose* had more in common with pirates than haughty colonial officials.¹²

From 1690 onward, Boston's interactions with privateers and pirates became increasingly guarded and hostile. After the 1689 revolution, Boston elites sought approval from King William III's government to obtain a new charter with limited restrictions on their local power. This entailed whole-heartedly joining William III's crusade against the French and shunning the maritime community it had long supported. It also meant alienating its young men through approval and adoption of Royal Navy impressment practices discussed in the previous chapter. Boston's new economic foundation would rest in English credit and commodities, the Atlantic logwood trade, and the ship outfitting and building industries. The port shifted its legal

¹² Randolph to Jenkins, July 26, 1683, *Edward Randolph*, 3:249.

institutions from supporting privateers and pirates like Michel Andreson to prosecuting them to the fullest extent of the law. As the last decade of the seventeenth century came to a close, Boston meticulously and dutifully enacted the new tools England provided to destroy piracy even as other colonial ports such as New York, Newport, and Philadelphia actively competed to replace Boston as “the common receptacle of pyratts of all nations.”¹³

The arrival of the *Rose* in 1686 and the formation of the Dominion Government under Edmund Andros thwarted Boston’s trade with privateers and pirates, forcefully disconnecting Boston from its suppliers of gold and silver. John Palmer noted after the revolution, Andros “diligently obstructed” Boston’s “constant and profitable correspondence with Foreigners and Pyrates ... which was very disagreeable to many Persons who had even grown old in that way of Trade.” Edward Randolph further remarked, “They are restrained from setting out privateers who for many yeares together robbed the Spanish West Indies and brought great bootyes to Boston; and also they durst not during the Governour's time, harbour pyratts.” Palmer and Randolph maintained that the economic duress many in Boston faced from the end of this trade to be a “chief cause of the Revolution.” Of course, such petty reasons for the revolution suited their agenda to mock Boston’s claims that it supported English law and order. Nevertheless, the pervasive discourse and ample evidence connecting Boston to pirates plagued the port’s defenders. Boston’s elites made the easy decision to do their utmost to halt blatant political and mercantile ties with pirates, as continuing to consort with them would only reinforce their enemies’ position.¹⁴

¹³ Edward Randolph to the Lords of Trade, May 29, 1689, in Edmund B. O’Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1854), 3: 578-583.

¹⁴ Ibid.; John Palmer, *An Impartial Account of the State of New England: Or, the Late Government there, Vindicated* (London, 1690) in *The Andros Tracts*, ed. W. H. Whitmore, 3 vols. (Boston, 1868-74), 1: 41; Anonymous, *A Short Discourse Shewing The great Inconvenience of joyning the Plantation Charters with those of England* in *The Andros*

Boston turned away from piracy at its most lucrative moment. Colonial officials estimated that the Indian Ocean pirate crews under the command of Thomas Tew and Henry Every returned to American colonies with £1,000 to £1,500 pounds each. Some of this wealth found its way to Boston through Newport, Rhode Island, where Boston merchants had connections, but New York, Newport, and Philadelphia benefitted the most from the Indian Ocean pirates. As the 1690s progressed, New York in particular dominated the Indian Ocean pirate trade. Governor William Fletcher welcomed pirate crews and granted privateering commissions, which eventually led to his recall by parliament and the installation of the anti-pirate governor, the Earl of Bellomont. Meanwhile, powerful New York merchants such as Frederick Philipse and Stephen Delancy sent their ships to St. Mary's in Madagascar, where the pirates had a base of operations. They supplied the pirates with guns, powder, clothes, and, most importantly, alcohol. In return, they received stolen gold, silver, and precious commodities from Mughal and European ships. They also acquired African slaves captured by the pirates. Historian Robert C. Ritchie contends that New York's economic stability and growth during the last decade of the seventeenth century was driven by this illicit trade with pirates.¹⁵

American pirates' migration to the Indian Ocean and the coast of Portuguese Brazil had unfortunate consequences for England's political and mercantile elites. Portugal had recently become a staunch ally of England and the East India Company had important but tenuous trade relations with the Mughal Empire. The new breed of pirates, however, presented Boston elites with an opportunity to demonstrate to London politicians and trade partners that their economic

Tracts, 2: 137-147. Samuel Shrimpton may have continued to trade with pirates see, G.B. Warden, *Boston: 1689-1776* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 9.

¹⁵ Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, 56; James G. Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700 to 1774" *The William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 35 no. 2 (Apr., 1978): 375-394, 376; James S. Leamon, "Governor Fletcher's Recall," *The William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 20, no. 4 (Oct., 1963), 527-542; Deposition of Adam Baldrige May 5, 1699 in John Franklin Jameson ed., *Privateering and Piracy In the Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents* (New York, New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1970), 183-186; Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 37.

reliance on pirates and smugglers had ended. For example, in May of 1693, Boston chased local privateer, smuggler, and future Indian Ocean pirate, Thomas Wake, out of the community for smuggling indigo from the Bahamas. Wake fled to Newport, Rhode Island in a sloop with five others after threatening to “pistol” any man that tried to “stop her.”¹⁶

In their quest to win Parliament’s approval, Boston authorities had turned a smuggler into a pirate. At Newport, Wake outfitted his sloop and gathered a large crew before setting sail for the Indian Ocean. Once there, he joined a large pirate fleet under the command of Henry Every with roughly 440 men. Every had glorious plans to attack the gold and silver-laden Mughal pilgrimage fleet sailing from Mocha in present day Yemen and returning to Surat, India. The pirates waited for over a month but the Mocha fleet slipped by them during night. Every and his compatriots gave chase for two weeks before finally catching their prize. They seized two vessels from the pilgrimage fleet, one of them, the *Ganji-i-sawai*, was owned by the Mughal emperor. The actions of Every, Wake, and the other Indian Ocean pirates involved in the assault detonated a political explosion that had significant consequences for future Indian Ocean pirates and the American colonies. Boston, because of Wake, found itself a primary target of Parliament’s wrath.¹⁷

Ironically, contemporary English politicians and historians today have frequently pointed to Wake as an example of a Boston pirate in the Indian Ocean and therefore the town’s continued support of and responsibility for Indian Ocean piracy. In January 1697, the Council of Trade erroneously informed Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton, “One [pirate ship] Commanded by Thomas Wake was fitted out from Boston. They Build their Ships there. The money they bring is

¹⁶ Depositions of John Foster, Nathaniel Byfield, and Robert Shelton, August 22, 1694, Massachusetts Archives Collection, 328 vols. (hereafter cited as Mass. Arch.), 61: 476-477, 480-481, and 483.

¹⁷ Baer, *Pirates*, chap. 4.

Current there.” Many Indian Ocean pirates may have originated in Boston but not with support from elites. As Stoughton responded to the Council, “They [pirates] find more countenance and better entertainment in other places. Pirates know that they are obnoxious to the Government here, which has passed an Act against piracy, and to the people in general.” In a back-handed chastisement of the Council, Stoughton continued, “Nevertheless I thank you for your incitement to watchfulness on such occasions as may wipe off any reflections unjustly cast upon Massachusetts in that regard [supporting pirates].” The Council had offended Boston’s political elites who had worked hard to erase their town’s poor reputation. Boston’s harsh dealings with pirates in the future may have been, in part, influenced by the Council’s mistaken beliefs.¹⁸

In late October 1698, Boston proved their zealous support of the suppression of piracy when authorities seized John Devin, Every’s surgeon, who had bravely travelled to Boston, his home. Devin had already been through a farcical trial in the Bahamas for piracy and received a certificate declaring his innocence. The pirate therefore knew he had little to fear in Boston where the court could not charge Devin twice for the same crime without new evidence. There was no option but to recognize the certificate because “in the sd Court at Providence, Proclamation was made, and nothing of further charge or Evidence appearing against the sd Jno. Devin.” Captain Every, as *A General History of the Pyrates* noted, may have also entertained the notion of making Boston his home but its politicians’ hostile stance towards pirates put him off the idea: “because a great deal of his Wealth lay in Diamonds; and should he have produced

¹⁸ Whitehall to Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton, January 20, 1697, Mass. Arch., 62: 154-163, quote at 162-63; Lieutenant Governor Stoughton to Council of Trade and Plantations, September 30, 1697, *CSPC*, vol. 14 (1693-1696), no. 1354.

them there [Boston], he would have certainly been seiz'd on Suspicion of Pyracý." Hence he settled in Ireland.¹⁹

Every wisely understood that power in Boston had shifted to politicians and merchants with links to England. The infamous pirate hunter turned pirate, Captain William Kidd, however, was not so prudent or fortunate. Kidd had followed in Every's footsteps, seizing vast fortune in the Indian Ocean and infuriating the Mughal Emperor. In the summer of 1699, he mistakenly believed he would find succor in Boston even though he had been warned in the West Indies to avoid the port. Bostonians lured Kidd into capture with false promises. He remained incarcerated for nine months as he awaited transportation to London. Once in London, Kidd endured a highly public trial, further imprisonment, and a hanging at Execution Dock. Parliament and East India Company officials hoped that Kidd's death would appease the "Great Mogull" Emperor and normalize trade relations.²⁰ Shortly thereafter, in 1701, the English navy attacked St. Mary's, the pirate base on Madagascar, and successfully destroyed it. The Lords of Trade committed additional warships to New York to aid the governor, Lord Bellomont, in suppressing the pirate trade there. With the Kidd affair, Boston had admirably fulfilled its duty in punishing seafaring men for disrupting lucrative trade routes, further distinguishing itself from other North American port cities.²¹

¹⁹ Certificate for John Devin (Bahamas), September (?) 20, 1698 and Certificate for John Devin (Massachusetts), October 25, 1698, in Jameson ed., *Privateering and Piracy*, 178-179; Daniel Defoe (Charles Johnson), *A General History of the Pyrates*, Manuel Schonhorn ed., (New York: Dover Publications, 1999), 55-56.

²⁰ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, chap. 8 and 9; P. Bradley Nutting, "The Madagascar Connection: Parliament and Piracy, 1690-1701," *The American Journal of Legal History* Vol. 22, No. 3 (Jul., 1978): 202-215; *Diary of Cotton Mather*, vol. 1: 1681-1709; vol. 2: 1709-24, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), 1:331; Paul Lorrain, *A True Account of the Behavior, Confession and Last Dying Speeches of Captain William Kidd* (London, 1701); *London Post*, 23-26 May 1701.

²¹ Lords of Trade to Lord Bellomont, Whitehall London, January 5, 1700 and Bellomont to the Board of Trade, November 28, 1700, in *Docs. Rel. Col. Hist. N-Y.*, 4: 454 and 792.

Boston's support of London-based policies aimed at controlling a wayward maritime population represented a significant realignment for the entire Atlantic World. Prior to this shift, the English American colonies lacked a strong beacon of law and order. This enabled many seafarers the opportunity to earn a higher standard of living than when operating in European waters, using to their own advantage piracy, privateering, smuggling, the logwood trade, and higher wages on colonial merchant vessels. Boston's transition to a credit and commodity-based economy reliant on the goodwill of English merchants signified the end of such opportunity. Common seamen in Boston now faced new policies, laws, institutions like the vice-admiralty court, and profit-seeking attitudes that mirrored experiences in London. Cotton Mather, however, blamed seafarers for the growing animosity, noting in 1711, "SAILORS who ought to be the Best men in the World, how Bad are very many of them! And it is now generally said, That tho' all the World knows they have had cause little enough, *they have in the Last Ten years notoriously grown worse and worse* [my emphasis]." Mather correctly identified the turn of the century as the origin of differences between Boston and common sailors but failed to recognize that Boston had changed far more than had sailors.²²

In the early eighteenth century, Boston seafarers continued to act under previously accepted norms that recognized ambiguity in maritime affairs and benefited both colonial officials and the maritime community. They expected decent treatment and pay for fighting the enemies of England and Massachusetts. With the declaration of war against France in 1702, 216 Boston sailors readily volunteered to join three privateer vessels preparing to support English efforts in the West Indies. Two of the ship captains, John Halsey and Thomas Larrimore, were well-known figures in the maritime community, having gained a good reputation among sailors

²² Cotton Mather, *Compassions Called For: An Essay Occasioned by Some Miserable Spectacles*, (Boston, 1711), 41-42.

as successful privateers during King William's War. In a truly patriotic act, Larrimore and his crew agreed to serve in the West Indies as an English military company. Governor Dudley remarked that Larrimore's reputation drew in the best crew available. Many of the volunteers who joined Larrimore's and Halsey's crews lived in Boston and some had participated in the logwood trade prior to the war. These volunteers undoubtedly expected rich rewards for their service, similar to their experience during the last war. The privateer ventures, however, did not go forward in the manner that the Massachusetts government, privateer captains, or the enlisted men envisioned.²³

Once they arrived in Jamaica, the Boston privateers learned that loyalty to country and being "good Englishmen" required service without pay. Larrimore's crew served in the West Indies and then Newfoundland for over a year and received nothing but food and drink. They suffered disease, hunger, injury, and a death rate of 67%. Governor Dudley sympathized with their plight but also refused to pay the crew when they returned to Boston in December of 1703. He claimed the English government owed them their wages and made a symbolic gesture by writing London to request the money. Larrimore loathed the injustice wrought upon his crew. He gathered his remaining men, angered Boston authorities by smuggling aboard seven pirates from John Quelch's crew, and set sail from Boston with the intent to recoup their wages through piracy. Boston rewarded Larrimore's service by capturing and packing him off to London for trial. Perhaps they feared a trial in Boston due to Larrimore's popularity. Disillusionment with Boston did not end with Larrimore's crew. In 1706, John Halsey's New England-based crew turned pirate in Indian Ocean waters. Halsey's brigantine appears to have been hijacked by the

²³ Crew Lists of the brigantine *Hannah and Mary* (Thomas Waffe, Master), brigantine *Adventure* (John Halsey, Master), and sloop *Flying Horse* (Thomas Larrimore, Master), *Mass. Arch.*, 62: 416-418; "Thomas Larrimore's Company" in Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, *Transactions*, vol. 18 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1917), 84-93.

rambunctious crew but he figuratively remained captain and was much beloved by his crew until his death on St. Mary's, Madagascar. Larrimore's and Halsey's crews represented the dissatisfaction and resistance of Boston seafarers towards new imperial policies enacted by the port and the politicians and merchants who treated them with disdain.²⁴

Boston authorities revealed to the seafaring community the full extent of their agreement with England's new maritime policies in May of 1704 when the privateer captain, John Quelch, sailed into Marblehead laden with Portuguese silver and gold. Initially circumstances in Marblehead and Boston favored Quelch and his crew. The *Boston News-Letter* reported on May 15, 1704 that "Captain Quelch in the Brigantine that Captain Plowman went out in, are said to come from New-Spain & have made a good Voyage." The crew dispersed, with those from New England making their way home and English sailors headed to their favorite ports of call.²⁵ Boston's legal and mercantile community, however, delved into Quelch's story and found that the silver and gold came from Portuguese ships, England's new ally. Authorities acted decisively, apprehending and jailing Quelch and many of the footloose crewmembers. The vice-admiralty court condemned Quelch and six others to hang as an example to the entire seafaring community but pardoned an unspecified number of pirates after they agreed to "join" the Queen's Navy. This was one solution to Boston's conflict with the Royal Navy over maritime labor and impressment.²⁶

Boston's eminent religious leader, Cotton Mather, took center stage in leading the moral condemnation of the seven pirates. On June 27, 1704 Mather visited the pirates in prison to

²⁴ Governor Dudley to [the Earl of Nottingham?], December 19, 1704, in Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, *Transactions*, vol. 18, 91-92; *Boston News-letter* 24 July 1704; Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, chap. 5, 465-471.

²⁵ *Boston News-Letter*, 15 May 1704. For a retraction of this statement see, *Boston News-Letter*, 22 May 1704.

²⁶ Dow and Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast*, chap. 7.

“Pray, preach, and Catechise” them in the hope of redeeming their souls before their hanging.²⁷

Three days later the first legally sanctioned hanging of pirates under the Piracy Act of 1700 in North America occurred. Mather led the pirates in a public spectacle meant to demonstrate the united front of Boston’s legal, commercial, and religious leaders in persecuting unruly seafarers. The party walked “on Foot through Town, to Scarlets Wharff, where, the Silver Oar being carried before them, they went by Water to the place of Execution, being Crowded and thronged on all sides with Multitudes of Spectators.” Boston’s populace, including the many maritime laborers necessary to control the 100 to 150 boats in the Charles River, turned out to see the sordid exhibition. The boat carrying the pirates and Mather stopped “midway between Hudson’s point and Broughton’s Warehouse” and the pirates ascended the scaffold onto the gallows where executioners placed nooses around their necks.²⁸

These men objected under the older understanding of piracy and its place in the Massachusetts economy.²⁹ Quelch, in his last words, conveyed his surprise and dismay that Boston had joined the imperial agenda to the detriment of the common seafarer: “When Lambert [one of Quelch’s fellow pirates] was Warning the Spectators to beware of Fal[se]-Company, Quelch Joyning [rejoined], ‘They should also take care how they brought Money into New-England, to be Hanged for it.’” Another sailor, Erasmus Peterson, “cried of injustice done him; and said, it is very hard for so many mens Lives to be taken away for so little gold.” Some in Boston, probably sailors and other waterfront workers, agreed with the pirates. Governor Joseph

²⁷ M. Halsey Thomas ed., *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 2 vols. (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 1: 509.

²⁸ Massachusetts, *An Account of the Behaviour and Last Dying Speeches of the Six Pirates* (Boston, 1704), 1; For a detailed account regarding the location and turn out for the execution see Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 509; For more on Mather’s role in Quelch’s execution, see, Steven J.J. Pitt, Cotton Mather and Boston’s ‘Seafaring Tribe’” *New England Quarterly* 85.2 (June, 2012): 232-235.

²⁹ Historian Marcus Rediker makes the argument that “a dialectic of violence” and “terror” occurred between the British Empire and pirates during the Golden Age of Piracy see, Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 13-16.

Dudley remarked to the Lords of Trade, “I should not have directed the printing of them [pamphlets] here, but to satisfy and save the clamour of a rude people, who were greatly surprised that any body should be put to death that brought in gold into the Province.” Nevertheless, Boston authorities showed no pity and the “scaffold was let sink.” The six bodies were left hanging over the Charles River as a visual warning to all sailors.³⁰

Governor Dudley and Cotton Mather applauded the executions. Dudley boasted to the Council of Trade that the pirates’ “suffering will be long and hard” and he hoped the executions would “forever be a warning to such evill men here.” Mather, meanwhile, wrote in a sermon: “That a principal Person among the pirates now going to Dy, upon the Gallows, was in one of his former Voyages, Flouting and Railing against a Minister [likely Mather] in this place who had never deserved it.” In their public hanging of Quelch and his crew and in their subsequent defense of the act, Boston merchants, officials, and religious leaders resolutely demonstrated to the Atlantic seafaring community that orderly trade routes, cheap maritime labor, and English credit had their full allegiance. With this important and symbolic shift, Boston became the principal port in English America disciplining common seafarers to England’s new commercial order.³¹

Boston had a unique responsibility for the eruption of Atlantic piracy that began in 1716 and lasted until 1726. The port worked closely with London to stabilize trade in the American colonies for the benefit of merchants and plantation owners. From Newfoundland to the Bay of

³⁰ The seventh pirate, Francis King received “a reprieve from his Excellency” at the gallows; see Massachusetts, *An Account of the Behaviour and Last Dying Speeches of the Six Pirates*, 3; Governor Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 25, 1705, *CSPC*, vol. 22 (1704-1705), no. 1274.

³¹ Governor Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 13, 1704, *CSPC*, vol. 22 (1704-1705), no. 455; Cotton Mather, *Faithful Warning to Prevent Fearful Judgments: Uttered in a brief Discourse Occasioned by a Tragical Spectacle in a number of miserables under a sentence of Death for PYRACY* (Boston, Massachusetts: Timothy Green, 1704).

Campeche, Boston vessels, seafarers, and merchant capital drew frontier communities into England's Atlantic network of credit and commodities. The economic basis of this system required cheap and controlled maritime labor. It also sought to limit the opportunities common seafarers gained from participating in privateering, the logwood trade, and piracy. Seafarers knew from Boston's treatment of earlier English pirates and privateers like Wake, Kidd, Larrimore, Halsey, and Quelch that the port had fully committed to England's vision of Atlantic commerce. This vision – and Boston's implementation of it – turned many previously loyal seafarers into bitter enemies of Boston and the British Empire.

In 1713 Boston merchants began sending large fleets of twenty or more large vessels into the Bay of Campeche, in modern-day Mexico, to obtain logwood to repay large debts to English merchants. They could not have foreseen that within three years their pursuit of a “cash crop” would ignite a decade of piracy. Historians have often argued that the end of Queen Anne's War created massive unemployment among seafarers, generating the necessary conditions for the large pirate fleets of the Golden Age of Piracy. This chronology does not fully explain the eruption of piracy in 1716 and into 1717. As Chapter 5 describes in more depth, Boston's 1714-1715 logwood season armada led to a shortage of food in the Bay of Campeche that drove the local inhabitants to piracy. They launched an easily defeated attack on the nearby Spanish town of Campeche. The Spanish counterattacked throughout 1716, eventually destroying Triste and forever closing the Bay of Campeche to the English.³²

Contemporaries recognized the end of this trade as one of the most important factors in the rise of piracy. One official noted that “most of them that first turn'd pirates” had “always sailed in these parts [American colonies] in privateers and lived in the Bay of Campechia.” Two

³² Rankin, *The Golden Age of Piracy*, 82; Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 23.

other colonial officials recommended swift negotiation with the Spanish to reopen the Bay of Campeche to the English because it was “the most likely thing to divert them [the pirates] from their piratical courses” and it would help “to bring the pyrates to become good subjects.”

Jeremiah Dummer of Boston remarked, “the Spaniards have at several times fallen upon our people whom they found cutting wood in the Bays beforementioned, and seiz'd their ships, whereby we have lost that trade; and the mariners who were employ'd in it to the number of 3000, have since turn'd pirates and infested all our seas.” Dummer’s noteworthy assessment came from a position of authority, having lived in the major centers of the logwood trade, Boston, the Netherlands, and London. Interestingly, Dummer’s report on the 3,000 seamen who lost employment due to the end of the logwood trade closely matches the historians’ best estimates for how many pirates operated in the Atlantic during the first six years of the Golden Age. This is not to suggest all pirates were ex-logwood cutters or involved in the logwood trade – they were not – but rather that contemporaries understood how important unemployment was to the rise of Atlantic piracy and believed the logwood trade would solve the crisis.³³

Boston’s intense exploitation of the Bay of Campeche logwood trade not only created favorable conditions for the rise of piracy in the West Indies but also provided pirates with recruits. The 200 Baymen who turned pirates due to food shortages and poverty in 1715 were some of the first willing or desperate enough to attack British shipping. Their subsequent actions led the Spanish to seize over 600 seafarers and logwood cutters in the Bay of Campeche, many of them from Boston ships. The Spanish disarmed the English seafarers and unleashed them on

³³ Extracts of several letters from Carolina, August 19, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), no. 660; Thomas Bernard, a Councillor of Jamaica, to John Chetwynd, a Commissioner for Trade and Plantations, Nicholas Lawes to Council of Trade and Plantations, December 6, 1719, and Jeremiah Dummer to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 25, 1720, *CSPC*, vol. 31 (1719-1720), nos. 548, 479, and 578; Jeremiah Dummer, *A Defence of the New England Charters* (London: W. Wilkins, 1721), 11; For number of pirates see, Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 29-30.

an unsuspecting Atlantic community. Governor Alexander Spotswood immediately recognized the potential threat the men posed, writing to England in July of 1716, “A nest of pirates are endeavouring to establish themselves at Providence and by the addition they expect of loose disorderly people from the Bay of Campeachy, Jamaica and other parts, may prove dangerous to British commerce, if not timely suppressed.”³⁴

Spotswood’s concerns became a reality when many of the liberated seafarers and Baymen settled in the Bahamas where, as he related from depositions from men fleeing the islands, they helped populate the pirate base at Nassau. Their arrival in the Bahamas coincided with a major ideological shift among the freebooters. Ex-privateers like Benjamin Hornigold, John Jennings, and Philip Cockram refrained from attacking British and Dutch shipping and spent their energies on looting Spanish and French vessels. As news from London conveyed in early March 1717, “There’s Advice that several Pirates which have a Deaths Head at the Stern of their Ships, continue to infest the Spanish West Indies, and Pillage all Ships they meet, except the English, from whom they only take Provision.” At roughly the same time of this account, however, Sam Bellamy overthrew the command of Hornigold with promises to attack vessels from all nations. Desperate seafarers previously engaged in the exploitative logwood trade and Baymen turned pirate due to Boston’s overbearing presence in the Bay of Campeche had good reason to spurn national and imperial loyalties. Their presence in the pirate crews may have been a deciding factor in Bellamy’s success. John Brown, previously employed in the logwood trade, verified that vessels engaged in that trade provided pirates with many recruits. Shortly after departing Hornigold, Bellamy seized two ships heading to the Bay of Honduras. The two

³⁴ *Boston News-letter* 19 September 1715; *Boston News-letter* 10 October 1715; *Boston News-letter* 25 June 1716 and 1 October 1716; *Boston News-letter* 1 April 1717; *Boston News-letter* 8 April 1717; Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 3, 1716, *CSPC*, vol. 29 (1716-1717), no. 240; Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, 161.

logwood ships provided twenty-seven new volunteers, bringing the total size of his crew to 120. In comparison, a Bristol ship trading with Jamaica only provided Bellamy with three new recruits.³⁵

Bellamy's multinational but primarily English crew represented the dispossessed seafaring men of the Atlantic economy: they were unemployed privateers, abused merchant seafarers, young men seeking adventure and fortune, ex-logwood cutters, and twenty-five ex-slaves. The liberated crew "pretended to be Robbin Hoods Men" and, at least initially, "forced no Body to go with them, and said they would take no Body against their Wills." Bellamy and his consort Paul Williams quickly acquired a notorious reputation in the West Indies by seizing English ships laden with precious commodities and bullion. Recognizing the danger of remaining in hostile waters, the two pirates designed to sail for Williams' home of Rhode Island. Undoubtedly they expected to sell their stolen loot to some of Newport's entrepreneurial merchants. Once on the North American coast, however, the waters abounded with colonial coasters and thus potential prizes. Bellamy had promised to allow the crew to seize English vessels and his position of authority would have been compromised if he failed to honor his pledge.³⁶

The pirates immediately began seizing colonial vessels, many of them connected to or owned by Boston merchants. Bellamy and Williams captured a Rhode Island man, Captain Beer, in a Boston sloop. Although Bellamy desired to return the sloop to Beer, his crew objected and

³⁵ Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 3, 1716, *CSPC*, vol. 29 (1716-1717), no. 240; "London, March 19" *Boston News-letter* 22 July 1717; Examination of John Brown, May 6, 1717 in Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy*, 293-295; For the three major transitional phases during the Golden Age of Piracy see, Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 35-36.

³⁶ Trial of Simon Van Vorst and Others, October 1717 and Deposition of Ralph Merry and Samuel Roberts, 11 and 16 May 1717 in Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy*, 303-306 and 301-302.

proceeded to sink the sloop. According to Captain Charles Johnson, Bellamy apologized to Beer for sinking the sloop but also berated the captain for serving his Boston masters:

damn ye, you are sneaking Puppy, and so are all those who will submit to be governed by Laws which rich Men have made for their own Security, for the cowardly Whelps have not the Courage otherwise to defend what they get by their Knavery; but damn ye altogether: Damn them for a Pack of crafty Rascals, and you, who serve them, for a Parcel of hen-hearted Numskuls. They vilify us, the Scoundrels do, when there is only this Difference, they rob the Poor under the Cover of Law, forsooth, and we plunder the Rich under the Protection of our Courage.

Bellamy's crew members that had been employed in the logwood trade and certainly the enslaved Africans could attest to how the laws of England protected the mercantile thieves. Meanwhile, Newport, rather than trade with Bellamy, outfitted two vessels to seize his ship.³⁷

Yet Bellamy's crew caused their own demise. In late April 1717, shortly after releasing Captain Beer on Block Island, the crew "got themselves Drunk and Asleep," which resulted in their ship's, *Whydah*, disastrous shipwreck off the coast of Cape Cod. Bellamy had ordered seven seamen and a captured pilot to guide the *Whydah* through Cape Cod's treacherous waters on board a captured pink. Bellamy followed with his drunken crew. The pilot of the pink was a locally born forced man. He saw that the pirates on the pink had also fallen into a drunken stupor and fatefully decided to guide the pink into the shoals. The entire crew abandoned the vessel and found refuge on a small island nearby. The seven pirates most responsible for the leading the *Whydah* to the gloomy depths of the Atlantic survived the "Breakers" but only two men out of the *Whydah's* crew of 130 made it ashore alive. Boston authorities managed to seize and incarcerate all nine surviving pirates but one died in prison shortly thereafter.³⁸

³⁷ *Boston News-letter*, 6 May 1717; Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 586-587, quote at 587.

³⁸ *Boston News-letter*, 6 May 1717.

The depredations of Bellamy and other pirates now willing to attack English shipping triggered a flurry of terrified complaints to Parliament from merchants in the West Indies, North America, and England. By early summer of 1717, London politicians began planning the best course of action to deal with the growing threat. They decided the carrot-and-stick approach would be the most effective. As the stick, the Council of Trade and Plantations prepared a squadron of Royal Navy vessels for the express purpose of pirate hunting. They also approved a plan by Woodes Rogers to reduce Nassau and the Bahamas to a state of subservience to the English Crown. As the carrot, Council recommended that the king issue a general pardon to all the pirates operating in the Atlantic if they would surrender to colonial governors. The conditions for the pardon allowed the pirates to keep their stolen loot and included clemency for murder: “That where the murther is comitted in the pyracry, it was H.M. intention to pardon the murther so committed.” Rumors of this general pardon circulated the English Atlantic even as Boston and other major port cities held incarcerated pirates.³⁹

Colonial governors and parliament faced another problem with their imprisoned pirates. The 1700 *Act for the More Effectual Suppressing Piracy* had expired with the death of Queen Anne. The colonies therefore technically no longer had the power to try and execute pirates. Governors in Barbados and New York sought to clarify how to deal with their prisoners with the Council of Trade. Governor Shute of Boston contacted the “Judge of the Court of Admiralty at home.” This common knowledge gave confidence to pirates held by colonial governments that life and freedom was a good possibility. Governor Lowther of Jamaica remarked that “their [the pirates] not being lyable to be try'd out of Great Britain for any robberies, murthers, or piracy's

³⁹ Mr. Burchett to Mr. Popple, March 4, 1717, Mr. Secretary Addison to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 15, 1717 and Mr. Secretary Addison to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 19, 1717, *CSPC*, vol. 29 (1716-1717), nos. 489, 649, 657, and 657i-vii.

they have or shall commit at sea” which “animates them to persist in their execrable villany’s.” Pirates reasonably concluded that the hassle involved with prosecuting pirates would discourage any action by colonial governments. In time, imprisoned pirates could be released or escape their confinement.⁴⁰

The ambiguity of piracy laws in the colonies emboldened pirates to threaten colonial governments holding their brothers. The pirates correctly singled out Boston as the most likely colonial port exceeding its authority by prosecuting the pirates held there. According to Captain Thomas Fox, in July of 1717 pirates captured his vessel and “they Questioned him whether anything was done to the Pyrates in Boston Gaoll.” The captain replied that he did not know, to which the pirates countered “if the Prisoners Suffered they would Kill every Body they took belonging to New England.” In October of 1717, Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard, made a similar threat, which circulated in the colonial newspapers: “One of our Pilates that was on board Teach the Pirates says that they very much threaten New-England men, in case any of their fellow Pirates suffer there, that they will revenge it on them.” Some historians have speculated that Teach left his long-time partner Benjamin Hornigold in Nassau to sail for North America with the sole purpose to attack Boston and rescue Bellamy’s crew from prison.⁴¹

Governor Samuel Shute and Boston authorities disregarded the pirates’ threats. In October of 1717, Shute received a tentative opinion from an Admiralty judge in London that he could prosecute the Bellamy’s crew under the old Piracy Act. Without waiting for confirmation or permission from the Council of Trade, he appointed a trial date, summarily found six of the

⁴⁰ Governor Lowther to Council of Trade and Plantations, July 20, 1717 and Governor Hunter to Council of Trade and Plantations, July 1717, *CSPC*, vol. 29 (1716-1717), nos. 661 and 690; Mr. Attorney and Mr. Solicitor General to the Council of Trade and Plantations, November 14, 1717 and Governor Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 26, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 201 and 575.

⁴¹ Trial of Simon Van Vorst and Others, October 1717 in Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy*, 303-306; Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 197.

pirates guilty, and sentenced them to death. The judgment must have come as surprise for the Bellamy's crew because they, like most early pirate crews, they had very little English blood on their hands. Indeed not one of the testimonies against Bellamy's crew in Boston accused the pirates of murder and often remarked that captured crews and captains were well-treated. More importantly, the legality of the trials and execution rested on questionable authority, which the pirates knew well. Nevertheless, on 15 November 1717, Boston raised the stakes in a high risk game of terror by publicly hanging the six members of Bellamy's crew – the first pirates executed in a colonial port during the Golden Age. The hanging of these six pirates in Boston once again transformed the pirate community and politicized their subsequent actions.⁴²

The murder of their brethren inflamed active pirate crews and, in particular, incited Edward Teach to seek vengeance. Teach sought out Boston-owned vessels and, after the execution of Bellamy's crew, may have actively positioned his ship to hurt Boston's most lucrative trade routes in the Bay of Honduras and North Carolina. In November of 1718, he seized a "great Ship" from Boston near St. Lucia commanded by Christopher Taylor. Teach locked Taylor in chains for twenty-four hours and allowed his crew to whip him in order to extract a confession about "what Money he had on board." Afterwards, Teach burned the ship. Then, instead of sailing to Nassua to rejoin his old compatriot and leader Benjamin Hornigold, Teach along with his consort Stede Bonnet voyaged to the Bay of Honduras. Unlike later pirates that fled to the Bay of Honduras to avoid the Royal Navy vessels hunting them, Blackbeard had very little reason to enter the Bay unless he desired to further devastate Boston's economy. As

⁴² Governor Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 26 June 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), no. 575; Trial of Simon Van Vorst and Others, October 1717 in Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy*, 303-306.

will be discussed in Chapter 5, the Spanish fortification of Trist forced Boston merchants still willing to hazard the logwood trade to send their crews to the Bay of Honduras to cut wood.⁴³

William Wyer, captain of the 400-ton ship *Protestant Caesar*, was one of the first Boston-owned vessels to re-engage in the logwood trade, setting sail from Boston in October 1717.⁴⁴ On the March 28, 1718, Wyer arrived on the outskirts of the Bay where he “espied a large Sloop which he supposed to be a Pirate.” Wyer and his crew mounted a valiant defense of the *Protestant Caesar*, which sent the pirate, Stede Bonnet, scurrying away for reinforcements. Wyer believed his bravery had ended the threat to his voyage and continued into the Bay of Honduras to cut his logwood. Roughly a week later, a pirate fleet of one large ship and four sloops sped towards the *Protestant Caesar*, which was anchored and loading logwood. Wyer “call’d his Officers and Men up on Deck asking them if they would stand by him and defend his Ship, they answered, if they were Spaniards they would stand by him as long as they had Life, but if they were Pirates they would not Fight.” When the crew discovered the pirate fleet included the sloop they had engaged the week prior, they, along with their officers and brave captain, deserted the ship without a fight.⁴⁵

In 1716, the *Protestant Caesar* had been extremely lucky. It escaped the Spanish destruction of Trist and was the last vessel from the Bay of Campeche ever to enter Boston in April of 1717.⁴⁶ Blackbeard, angry that Wyer would “brag when he went to New-England that he had beat a Pirate,” looted his ship for three days but released Wyer and his crew. He also “said he would burn his Ship because she belonged to Boston, adding he would burn all Vessels belonging to New-England for Executing the six Pirates at Boston.” Blackbeard understood that

⁴³ *Boston News-letter*, 18 August 1718 and 18 November 1717.

⁴⁴ “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston News-letter*, 14 October 1717.

⁴⁵ *Boston News-letter*, 18 June 1718.

⁴⁶ “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston News-letter* 22 April 1717

the loss of a 400-ton ship and its cargo of logwood hurt Boston and its merchant elites far more than killing or terrorizing the seafaring men employed by those merchants. To further demonstrate his point, Teach gave a captured Rhode Island captain, Thomas Newton, his sloop back “because she belonged to Rhode Island.” The massive ship, a testament to Boston’s wealth and power in the Atlantic World, however, could not escape the retribution of the people of the sea.⁴⁷

Boston earned the wrath of not only Atlantic pirates but also the Council of Trade in London. Unlike the governments of Barbados and New York, Boston moved ahead with the trial and execution of its imprisoned pirates without full authority to do so. Governor Shute wrote the Council on November 9, 1717 to inform them that Bellamy’s crew had been tried and an execution planned. The Council did not read the letter until late February 1718 and their response suggested immense disapproval, “We take notice that eight pirates have been tryed, upon which we desire to know by virtue of what power those tryals have been.” Like pirates, the Council operated under the notion that the American colonies could no longer execute pirates under the Piracy Act of 1700.⁴⁸

Boston’s actions threatened a year’s worth of planning on the Council’s part. Those schemes began to materialize just as Boston hanged Bellamy’s crew. On 5 September 1717, part of the Council’s plan to end piracy went into effect when King George I issued the Act of Grace. This proclamation pardoned all piracies before 5 January 1718 and gave the pirates until 5 September 1718 to surrender. The pardon covered the piracies of Bellamy’s crew, which undoubtedly raised the ire of pirates like Blackbeard when they learned of the Act of Grace.

⁴⁷ *Boston News-letter*, 18 June 1718.

⁴⁸ Governor Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, November 9, 1717 and Council of Trade and Plantations to Governor Shute, March 6, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 193 and 419.

Boston likely knew about the pardon before they executed the six pirates.⁴⁹ The Council of Trade therefore intended to play the carrot first but the stick was not far behind. Additional Royal Navy station ships began arriving in the colonies during the late fall and early winter of 1717. Then, on 30 January 1718, the Council revived the *Act for the More Effectual Suppressing of Piracy* and began the process of sending commissions to colonial governors with the purpose of legalizing the trial and execution of pirates. London's message to the pirates – accept the pardon or face increased force from the Royal Navy and the potential of death in colonial ports. With Boston's preemptive and quasi-legal execution of Bellamy's crew, pirates already had to fear death in colonial ports.⁵⁰

Word of the general pardon arrived in Nassau near the end of December 1717. Colonial governors reported that news of the pardon delighted the pirates and there were many promises to accept. This was especially true of those pirates serving under Henry Jennings, Benjamin Hornigold, and Philip Cockram, who had discouraged their peers and refrained from attacking English vessels. Despite their enthusiasm, few pirates actually surrendered to colonial governors

⁴⁹ Some historians have argued that word of the pardon did not arrive in the colonies until 9 December 1717 with the publication of the king's proclamation in the *Boston News-letter*; however, the rationale that this was "because no Royal Navy vessels" made the journey is faulty, see, Woodard, *The Republic of Pirates*, 358. Merchant vessels carried the vast majority of correspondence and brought the most current issues of London newspapers. The proclamation was published on September 5, 1717, which meant Boston could have easily received notification of it prior to executing Bellamy's crew on November 15, 1717. Indeed the noted ship captain and writer Nathaniel Uring sailed from London in mid-September and arrived in Boston by November 4, 1717, see, Nathaniel Uring, *A History of the Voyages and Travels of Captain Nathaniel Uring* (London, 1726), 322-323 and "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter*, 4 November 1717. Thomas Lithered, a well-known and respected ship captain in the Boston to London trade, arrived with Uring. Lithered often carried "the latest News" from England and Europe, for example see, *Boston News-letter*, 18 June 1718. Additional vessels from England and London arrived the following week, see, "Entrances," *Boston News-letter*, 11 November 1717. Cotton Mather's execution sermon also hints that Boston officials were well aware of London's plans for pirates: "and the Methods now taking by the *British Crown* for the Suppression of these Mischiefs [piracy] may be prospered," see, Cotton Mather, *Instructions to the Living, from the Conditions of the Dead* (Boston, Massachusetts: John Allen, 1717), 37.

⁵⁰ For the Council of Trade's plans regarding general pardon and King's Proclamation thereof, see, Mr. Secretary Addison to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 15, 1717, *CSPC*, vol. 29 (1716-1717), no. 649 and *Post Boy* (1695) (London, England), 14 September 1717; For renewal of the *Act for the More Effectual Suppressing of Piracy* see, Council of Trade and Plantations to the King, September 18, 1717 and Order of Council, January 30, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 91 and 338.

because the power to pardon rested solely with the king. The pirates would therefore have to wait for their pardon from England and, after hearing about the fate of Bellamy's crew, they were suspicious. Others, like Charles Vane and Edward England, had no intention of accepting the pardon and actively undermined the efforts of Jennings, Hornigold, and Cockram. Vane spent the month of May 1718 terrorizing Bermudians perhaps because Governor Bennet of Bermuda was among the most active governors attempting to persuade the pirates to accept the pardon.⁵¹

Still, pirates slowly began to surrender, entering most major colonial ports including Bridgetown, Barbados, Kingston, Jamaica, Charleston, South Carolina, Philadelphia, New York, and Newport. Conspicuously and for good reason, not a single pirate surrendered in Boston. In mid-March 1718, Peter Heywood of Jamaica conveyed optimism to the Council that the pardon had the desired effect, noting, "A considerable no. of the pyrates have come in and surrendred upon H.M. proclamation and more they assure me will as they find opportunities of vessels." Governor Bennet also presented a hopeful assessment but warned the Council of Trade that many pirates from Nassau required an immediate pardon by colonial governors rather than King George I in order to surrender. Bennet feared if the Council did not act quickly the pirates would once again begin their depredations. Vane's actions in the subsequent months strengthened those fears. The Council of Trade eventually heeded Bennet's advice and provided commissions to colonial governors to pardon pirates.⁵²

Governor Shute, meanwhile, painted a much bleaker picture than his counterparts in the West Indies. He received the letter from the Council of Trade questioning his authority to

⁵¹ Lt. Governor Bennett to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 3, 1718, Peter Heywood, Commander in Chief of Jamaica, to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 7, 1718, and Capt. Hornigold and other pirates to Peter Heywood, C. in C. of Jamaica, February 7, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 345, 357, and 357i.

⁵² Peter Heywood, C. in C. of Jamaica, to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 17, 1718 and Lt. Governor Bennett to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 29, 1717, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 447 and 474.

execute Bellamy's crew in June 1718 shortly after news arrived that Teach had burned Taylor's "Great ship" and the 400-ton *Protestant Caesar*. With these captures in mind, Shute wrote to the Council defending his prosecution of the pirates. He also enlightened the Council that "The King's gracious Proclamation has not produced the hoped for effects; for the pirates still continue to rove on these seas; and if a sufficient force is not sent to drive them off our Trade must stop." Shute's assessment of the proclamation's effectiveness sought to justify his proactive use of state-sponsored terror. Of course, without Boston's execution of Bellamy's crew the pardon may have been more successful. Boston's trade certainly would not have suffered the vengeance of Blackbeard's pirate fleet.⁵³

Shute's defense surprised the Council of Trade. They began an investigation into his claims, perhaps hoping to lay blame for the pardon's apparent failure at his feet. The Council first contacted the admiralty judge, Sir Henry Penrice, whose opinion had led to Bellamy's execution. The Council told Penrice in advance that they "do believe" that the execution of Bellamy's crew "may be a mistake, because Sir E. Northey was of the opinion that all the Commissions sent to the several Governors in the Plantations empowering them to try pirates in King William's time" were null and void. Penrice told the Council that he had informed Governor Shute that the *Act for the More Effectual Suppressing of Piracy* was "still in force." However, the judge shrewdly deflected responsibility for the execution back to the Massachusetts Bay governor, claiming, "I am very certain it was never proposed to me to report my opinion whether the Commission issued by the late Queen for the trial of pirates" transferred authority to execute pirates to Governor Shute. Penrice's letter to New England, however,

⁵³ Governor Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 26, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), no. 575.

suggests he advised the pirates could “most properly and legally” be “proceeded against,” thereby implicating the judge in Boston’s decision.⁵⁴

During the late summer and fall of 1718, the Council of Trade kept digging into the legality of Shute’s actions and laid their case against Shute before the Solicitor General. Fortunately for Shute, more bad news of continued pirate depredations in the West Indies and South Carolina poured into London. Then word arrived from South Carolina in October that Stede Bonnet had been captured. The colony was in the process of prosecuting the pirates and intended to execute them. Likewise, Governor Rogers from the Bahamas informed the Council that he had five pirates in custody and anticipated hanging them before Christmas as examples to Nassau’s unruly population. Soon Governor Shute and Boston would not be alone in executing pirates.⁵⁵

In light of these developments, which clearly indicated that the carrot had failed and colonial governments expected the authority to use violence in suppressing pirates, it seemed unwise to continue to hound Governor Shute. On 5 March 1719, after word arrived of the pirate executions in South Carolina and the Bahamas, the Solicitor General, William Thomson, made his decision:

I have considered the tryal of the pirates before Governor Shute *etc.*, and I conceive they had authority to hold that Court *etc.*, for that the proclamation of the first of King George did continue the Commission to try pirates which was granted in the third year of the Queen, that Commission being subsisting at the time of the said proclamation.

⁵⁴ Mr. Popple to Sir Henry Penrice, August 14, 1718, Sir H. Penrice to Mr. Popple, August 16, 1718, and Copy of Sir H. Penrice to Mr. Burchett submitted to Council of Trade, letter written August 16, 1717 Council of Trade received August 22, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 656, 658, and 669ii.

⁵⁵ Governor and Council of South Carolina to the Council of Trade and Plantations, October 21, 1718 and Governor Rogers to Mr. Secretary Craggs, November 11, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30, no. 807.

Thomson further explained his decision, noting that even if Governor Shute proceeded illegally it would be a simple matter to “indemnify” him and any others who acted similarly. The Solicitor General’s decision signaled an end to inquiries into Shute’s execution of Bellamy’s crew. It also reflected London’s growing intolerance of Atlantic pirates and willingness to use violence to eradicate them. Henceforth, Boston and the capital stood side-by-side in their commitment to consider pirates “as *Common Enemies of Mankind*” and, as Boston’s famous minister, Cotton Mather, encouraged to “Extirpate them out of the World.” In the words of Marcus Rediker, the “tit for tat” terror that defined Boston’s relationship with pirates from very early on became commonplace for the rest of the Atlantic world.⁵⁶

The Atlantic rulers received a short reprieve from pirates in 1719 when England declared war on Spain. The king extended his pardon to pirates in order to entice them onto English privateer vessels. The tactic proved more successful than in early to mid-1718 and the *Boston News-letter* reported that English privateers gained much experience by having ex-pirates on board “well accustomed to Fighting.” Nevertheless, pirates continued to operate near South Carolina and some, like Edward England, vacated the Atlantic to follow in the footsteps of Henry Every and attack Mughal shipping in the Indian Ocean. Some English pirates also joined the Spanish to fight against their homeland although it seems unlikely that many ex-logwood cutters made that decision. News that England and Spain had settled their differences arrived in the colonies on 9 May 1720. Once again, the ex-pirates/now-privateersmen found themselves expendable to their nation and unemployed. From the ashes of the war with Spain arose a new breed of pirates embodying the “grievances of the lower deck.” Ex-privateer captains and officers like Hornigold, Jennings, Cockram, and Blackbeard no longer commanded the pirate

⁵⁶ Mr. Solicitor General to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 5, 1719, *CSPC*, vol. 31 (1719-1720), no. 88; Mather, *Instructions to the Living*, 17; Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 13.

fleets. In their place, enraged seafarers and mutineers like Bartholomew Roberts, George Lowther, and, most importantly for our story, Edward Low, directed renewed and increasingly violent efforts against England's maritime commercial empire.⁵⁷

The years 1717-1719 had been tough on Boston's shipping. Pirates plundered, commandeered, and burned at least sixteen Boston-owned vessels, including seven large ships, brigs, and snows. The 400 ton *Protestant Caesar* alone was worth roughly £4000 sterling not including its cargo. In this regard Boston suffered more than other colonial ports because pirates more often than not burned the port's vessels in revenge for hanging Bellamy's crew. Pirates also had disrupted Boston's most lucrative trade routes, including the essential naval stores trade with the Carolinas and the logwood trade in the Bay of Honduras. The port was inundated with terrifying reports from all over the Atlantic, some of which described pirates' burning hatred of Boston. In 1718 alone, two of every three issues of the *Boston News-letter* issues referenced the terror sown by Atlantic pirates and the ineffective steps the colonies and London took to suppress them. In December 1718, Edward England plundered the last Boston vessel before the port had a pirate-free eighteen months. But then ominous word arrived in July 1720 that Bartholomew Roberts had taken the ship *Samuel*, commanded by Samuel Cary, in its voyage from London to Boston.⁵⁸

Pirates had finally targeted Boston's most important and expensive import trade. Samuel Cary was a well-respected and trusted Boston ship captain who was responsible for overseeing the importation of English manufactured goods and the luxury items of Boston's merchant-elite.

⁵⁷ *Boston News-letter* 30 November 1719 and 9 May 1720; Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, 166-167.

⁵⁸ *Boston News-letter* 6 January 1718 – 29 December 1718; For Edward England's capture of a Boston vessel see, Deposition of Jonathan Bull, December 19, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), no. 797 iv; For Cary's capture see, *Boston News-letter* 22 August 1720.

The *Boston News-letter* ran an entire page on the “the dismal Account” of the attack. It described in detail the pirates’ “madness and rage” as they tore through the precious trinkets and trunks of Boston’s elite men. Any item they did not want to keep “they threw them over board into the Sea” instead of politely “Tossing them into the Hould [hold].” The pirates then turned their attention to “some Hampers of fine wines that were either presents, or sent to some Gentlemen in Boston” even though the gluttonous freebooters had “near 20 Tuns of Brandy” on their own vessels. In the most unrefined manner, the pirates “would not wait to unty them and pull out the Corks with Skrews” but rather “each man took his bottle and with his Cutlash cut off the Neck, and put it to their Mouths and drank it out.” From the perspective of the *News-letter* and Boston’s genteel culture, this blasphemous behavior towards property reinforced their perception of seafarers as animals requiring control lest they drink fine wine and destroy expensive property. Roberts’s crew, meanwhile, enjoyed mocking the pampered lifestyle of merchants and politicians. Furthermore, the crew happily appropriated Cary’s cargo worth £9,000 to £10,000 sterling or £90 to £100 per man. It was an excellent haul for men who had previously risked their lives and labored hard on board merchant vessels for roughly £25 to £35 per year.⁵⁹

The pirates’ offensive action terrified and infuriated Boston’s elite merchants. Samuel Sewall expressed concern in his diary, noting, “Cary arrives who had been pillaged by the Pirats; which put me in fear respecting Judith’s [Sewall’s wife] Memorandums: but blessed be GOD, before the week was out Dumaresque arrived and brought them safely to the joy of all. The miscarriage of them would have distress’d me.” Sewall bemoaned the potential loss of his own property worth £50 sterling, which included “Curtains and Vallens for a bed,” “good black Walnut Chairs,” “A True Looking Glass of Black Walnut Frame of the newest Fashion,” and

⁵⁹ *Boston News-letter* 22 August 1720; for wages see, Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, appendix C.

“four handsome Glass Sconces to set Candles in.” He failed to express any concern or remorse for Cary or his crew, four of whom the pirates impressed at gunpoint. This sort of self-absorbed interest in property and money over human lives infuriated the Reverend Cotton Mather and impelled him to call on Boston merchants to “make *Poor Seamen*, and their Destitute Families, the Object of your Liberality. The *Merchant* concerned in the Harvest of the Voyage, may do well to bear a part in such *Alms*. His *Estate* has been ventured, when his person has not.”

Although Mather would not have approved of their methods, Roberts’s crew and other pirates ensured that merchants paid their due. The actions of pirates, however, did not mollify Boston merchants’ pursuit of profit at the expense of maritime laborers. Indeed, losses like Cary’s £10,000 cargo put greater pressure on Boston ship captains to extract the most from their men. Boston merchants may have also felt pressure to make the fateful decision to revive their languishing and labor intensive logwood trade.⁶⁰

The end of the Bay of Campeche logwood trade in 1716 damaged Boston’s economy and it made good sense for the town’s merchants to revive the trade. Boston’s brief attempt in 1718 to enter the unpredictable and remote Bay of Honduras to extract logwood failed miserably at the hands of Blackbeard. In 1719 not a single vessel entered or cleared for the Bay of Honduras and only one entered in 1720. After the war with Spain concluded in May 1720 and Roberts’s audacious ransacking of the *Samuel*, Boston merchants slowly began to send smaller vessels into the Bay of Honduras. In 1721, six vessels entered from the Bay and two cleared. In 1722, another six vessels entered from the coast of Belize. One of these six vessels had likely departed Boston in 1721 with a recently unemployed Boston rigger named Edward Low.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 954-955 and 954, note 37; Cotton Mather, *The Sailours Companion and Counsellor* (Boston, 1709), 62.

⁶¹ See “Bay of Honduras Logwood Trade” appendix, graph 2.

“Ned” Low was born in Westminster, London. He lived there in impoverished conditions and spent much of his youth picking pockets and gambling. When Low reached an appropriate age, his elder brother enticed him to make a living at sea. Low’s employment eventually took him to Boston where he likely settled in 1711. According to Boston-based portledge bills, Edward Low signed a contract with Captain Thomas Porter for an intended voyage from Boston to Jamaica to the Bay of Campeche and finally to Oporto, Portugal where the ship’s owner, English merchant Timothy Harris, resided. While waiting for the *Content* to set sail, Low probably encountered his future wife, Elizabeth Marble of Boston. Like Ramblin’ Jack Cremer who fell for a “Red headed,” “well-Riged” Boston girl and Cremer’s Chief Mate who “got married” in Boston “god help him,” Elizabeth transformed Ned Low’s watery world.⁶²

Fortunately for Low, the *Content* required major repairs and although he was hired October 4, 1711 the ship did not sail until May 2, 1712. He decided the voyage with Porter, which would have taken close to two years and had a final destination in Portugal, was too long to be away from his newfound love. He also knew that seafarers faced danger in the Bay of Campeche. He, along with friend Edward Rumley, received permission from the *Content*’s supervising merchant, Charles Shipreeve, to ship out on board the pink *Francis* instead. The *Francis* was commanded by Samuel Foye who came from a long line of respected Boston ship captains. This ensured that Boston would be Low’s home port. In a little less than a year, Low was back in Boston with £16:02 Massachusetts currency in his pocket after an uneventful voyage to Barbados and Saltertuda to obtain salt. Afterwards, Low joined a growing multitude of waterfront laborers in Boston as a rigger. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, Low’s new

⁶² Portledge Bills for *Content*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 17, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter cited as MHS); Boston, *Records Relating to the Early History of Boston, Volume 28* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1898), 53; R. Reynell Bellamy ed. *Ramblin’ Jack: The Journal of Captain John Cremer, 1700-1774* (London, England: Jonathan Cape LTD., 1936), 112-114.

profession allowed him to benefit from stable employment based on the exploitation of foreign resources and maritime labor. He also would have developed local credit relations with Boston's merchant elite. In other words, Low was now settled and ready to marry a local girl.⁶³

On August 12, 1714, Low's hard work and commitment finally paid off when he married his sweetheart, Elizabeth. In late 1719, the couple joyfully welcomed a baby girl into their lives. Low's happiness, however, abruptly ended when Elizabeth died shortly after delivering their daughter due to post-pregnancy complications, a common occurrence in the early modern era. Elizabeth's death could not have come at a worse time for Low both emotionally and economically. As historian Elaine Crane has demonstrated, Boston's waterfront women contributed significantly to the financial success of the household. Low's family almost certainly relied heavily on Elizabeth for financial resources due to the decline of Boston's shipbuilding industry after the collapse of the Bay of Campeche logwood trade. The downturn of 1717 also triggered new laws targeting the credit economy on which so many merchants, waterfront tradesmen, and laborers relied. Low, like many other waterfront tradesmen and laborers in Boston, likely suffered from sporadic employment, reduced wages, and limited access to credit. Together, these local and international factors would have compelled Low to return to seafaring in 1721 in order to support his motherless daughter. He signed a contract in the high paying but brutal Bay of Honduras logwood trade.⁶⁴

Low's experience in the Bay of Honduras mirrored many other Boston mates and seamen in the logwood trade. The captain placed Low in charge of the woodcutting crew. It appears that

⁶³ Ships' Papers, *Content* and *Francis*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 17, MHS; Dow and Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast*, 141-142.

⁶⁴ Johnson notes that Low "being too apt to disagree with his Masters, he left them." If he disagreed with his Masters, it was likely because he needed more work or wages to support his daughter see, Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 319; Elaine Forman Crane, *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports and Social Change 1630-1800* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 17-18.

because the crew only had to supply enough wood for a sloop they simply jumped off the vessel, began cutting, and then loaded the logwood. They did not enter the woods and set up camp. The unknown sloop's captain desired to load his logwood quickly and leave the Bay of Honduras behind. The trade was especially dangerous with both the Spanish and pirates preying on British logwood vessels. The captain therefore pushed Low's crew hard. One evening just before dinner, after Low and his crew had finished loading a bundle of logwood, Low "desired that they might stay and Dine; but the Captain being in a Hurry for his Lading, ordered them a Bottle of Rum, and to take t'other Trip." Famished after a hard day of labor, Low became enraged, firing his musket "at the Captain, but missing him, shot another poor Fellow thro' the Head." Although we cannot possibly know what happened after this accidental killing, it seems likely that the captain commanded the crew to seize Low and imprison him aboard the sloop. The crew, who had spent weeks laboring with Low, refused and joined Low in mutiny.⁶⁵

Some historians have speculated that Low and his men had planned to become pirate prior to this incident but that is mere speculation based on flawed logic.⁶⁶ Like the sailor David Wallace in Boston, who killed a ship's cook over the insult of raw meat in 1713, it is far more likely that Low acted impulsively and in response to the captain's provocation. As the realization of what he had done dawned on him, perhaps Low grasped that his only chance of returning to Boston and seeing his daughter was to turn pirate. From living and working on the Boston waterfront, Low would have been well aware of King George I's multiple pardons for pirates, which were broadcasted in the *Boston News-letter* and other proclamations. Low's turn to piracy and subsequent actions makes far more sense in this context, as he hoped that another pardon

⁶⁵ See Chapter 5 for Boston mates and seamen in the logwood trade; Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 319.

⁶⁶ Dow and Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast*, 143; Gregory N. Flemming, *At the Point of a Cutlass: The Pirate Capture, Bold Escape, and Lonely Exile of Philip Ashton* (New England: ForeEdge Press, 2014), 10-11.

that included murder on the high seas would be issued. The first-person account of impressed Marblehead fisherman, Philip Ashton, supports the notion that Low believed or hoped he may eventually be reunited with his daughter in Boston, as he frequently told the forced Marblehead fisherman that Ashton “should go home when he did and not before.”⁶⁷

Historians have demonized Ned Low as the most bloodthirsty pirate of the Golden Age but none have thoroughly examined his experiences prior to becoming pirate and motivations during his time as a pirate. Low’s sanity may have been compromised after the death of his wife, separation from his daughter in Boston, poor treatment in the Bay of Honduras, and realization that he may never see his daughter again. Ashton’s narrative reflects a man tortured by his past but also humanized the beleaguered pirate. According to Ashton, Low refused to take any married sailor despite relying heavily on impressment to fill his crew. His past played an important role in that decision:

It seems his design was to take no Married Man away with him, how young soever he might be, which I often wondred at; till after I had been with him some considerable time, and could observe in him an uneasiness in the sentiments of his Mind, and the workings of his passions towards a young Child he had at Boston (his Wife being dead, as I learned some small time before he turned Pirate) which upon every lucid interval from Revelling and Drink he would express a great tenderness for, insomuch that I have seen him sit down and weep plentifully upon the mentioning of it.

Low’s humanity asserted itself in other ways. He willingly risked his own life to save an impressed ship’s doctor, John Kencate, when his vessel, the pink *Rose*, suffered a careening accident near Guiana. Low had already escaped the sinking vessel when he noticed Kencate

⁶⁷ Cotton Mather, *The Sad Effects of Sin: A True Relation of the Murder Committed by David Wallace, on his Companion Benjamin Stolwood* (Boston, 1713), i – x; John Barnard, *Ashton’s Memorial: An History of the Strange Adventures and Signal Deliverances of Mr. Philip Ashton* (Boston: Samuel Gerrish, 1725), 16.

trapped by the water rushing in through the portholes. He managed to grab the doctor by the shoulder and drag him to safety.⁶⁸

Low also recognized the paradox of impressing sailors and treating them poorly to serve his interests. At one point, Ashton and a few other impressed men designed to murder the small pirate crew under the command of Low's quartermaster, Francis Spriggs, and escape to New England on board a stolen schooner. Spriggs learned of their plot and told Low who, in response, humorously "said he did not know, but if it had been his own case, as it was ours, he should have done so himself." Low did not punish Ashton and his compatriots even though most ship captains in the merchant marine or Royal Navy would have certainly beaten mutinous crew members bloody. Upon uncovering a potential mutiny on board his vessel, Nathaniel Uring, another veteran of the logwood trade, "chastiz'd" crew members "very handsomely" by thrashing them with a cane. He gave one sailor "two or three such Strokes with a Stick I had prepared for that purpose, that he soon changed his Note, the Blood running about his Ears, he pray'd for God's sake that I would not kill him." Pirates did not hold a monopoly on torture, violence, and murder on the high seas. Nevertheless, Low became increasingly violent as his crew suffered losses at the hands of the Royal Navy and colonial port cities and the days and months went by without a new pardon issued by the king.⁶⁹

Low and his crew employed terror far more frequently and with greater violence than many other pirates. Predominantly Catholic, Portuguese, Spanish, and French seafarers received Low's most ruthless treatment. In one instance, he and his crew slaughtered dozens of Spaniards in the Bay of Honduras. This massacre, however, likely had its roots in the bloody frontier

⁶⁸ Barnard, *Ashton's Memorial*, 3 and 10.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 15; Uring, *A History of the Voyages and Travels of Captain Nathaniel Uring*, 260-261.

warfare between English logwood cutters and the Spanish in the Bay of Honduras logwood trade. Many of Low's crew had been employed in that trade and probably felt justified considering the atrocities committed by the Spanish on English Baymen and seafarers. Low also took revenge upon New England ship captains and merchants through torture and destruction of property because, as the *General History* relates, he had an "irreconcilable Aversion to New-England Men."⁷⁰

Boston's logwood trade had produced another pirate and once again the port would suffer for it. Low and his compatriots soon joined another mutineer pirate, George Lowther, who had worked in conditions far worse than the logwood trade on board a slave ship. Low was appointed a lieutenant and the two men began cruising around the Bay of Honduras for potential prizes. Boston's reinvigorated logwood trade suffered disaster at the hands of these two determined pirates. In January 1722, they seized a 200 ton Boston-owned ship called the *Greyhound*, commanded by Benjamin Edwards. After a brief resistance, Edwards struck his colors but the pirates, according to the *Boston Newsletter*, savagely beat the men on board the ship and impressed others. Some of the impressed, however, like the second mate Charles Harris, soon recognized that their own interests coincided with the pirates and willingly cooperated. The pirate crew set the *Greyhound* ablaze undoubtedly at Low's insistence. Low and Lowther then seized two more Boston-based brigantines in the Bay of Honduras and like the *Greyhound* burned them with their cargoes of logwood.⁷¹

Low continued to damage Boston's shipping throughout his career as a pirate. He seized at least eleven Boston-based vessels, which more than doubles the total of any other single

⁷⁰ *American Weekly Mercury* 2 May 1723; Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 326.

⁷¹ *Boston News-letter* 7 May 1722.

pirate. Low, like Edward Teach before him, burned or sank most of these vessels in revenge. Unlike Teach, Low tortured Boston ship captains and crews. From May through September 1723, Low menaced the New England coast as he had done in 1722 when he captured the Marblehead schooner that employed Philip Ashton. The 1723 voyage, however, was different for two reasons. First, Captain John Welland of Boston, master of the *Amsterdam Galley*, had likely arrived in Boston in late May with a terrifying story of his experiences at the hands of Low. After seizing and pillaging the *Amsterdam Galley* near Bermuda, Low brought Welland aboard his sloop “where he was very much abused, having several Wounds with a Cutlass, and at last they cut off his right Ear.” The pirates then sank the *Amsterdam Galley*, placing Welland and his crew on board another captured vessel from Piscataqua. Welland’s earless appearance undoubtedly horrified Boston’s merchants and ship captains. Second, as Low sailed toward Block Island, he was met by New York’s station ship, the H.M.S. *Greyhound* and its commander Peter Solgard. A naval engagement ensued, ending with Low fleeing and his quartermaster, Charles Harris, of the logwood ship *Greyhound* captured with the sloop *Ranger* by Solgard. The prisoners were taken to Newport where they had a quick trial with the aid of Boston lawyers and witnesses. On July 19, 1723, one of the largest mass executions of pirates took place in a port that had long been a friend to the pirate community. Six years after Boston, Rhode Island had finally chosen sides.⁷²

Boston merchants and ship captains became extremely cautious of Low with Welland’s gruesome experience ringing in their ears and word from captured fishermen that Low sought revenge for the execution of Harris and his crew. In mid-July, an abandoned and ransacked Boston sloop arrived from New Hampshire; it was assumed that Low had killed the entire crew

⁷² Court of Vice-Admiralty for Rhode Island, *Tryals of Thirty-Six Persons for Piracy* (Boston: Kneeland, 1723).

and captain, William Clark. The terror induced by Ned Low reduced Boston's entrances and clearances by over 50% from the previous year from May through September. In June 1723 only 32 cleared out, typically one of the most active months for shipping. Even when Boston issued a seven day embargo in June 1717 due to the presence of pirate Paul Williams, clearances in June and July equaled 71 and 78 respectively. Boston merchants also willingly increased the number of vessels and men sent into North and South Carolina when it was infested by Boston-hating pirates in 1718, further demonstrating that pursuit of profit frequently trumped pirate threats. Boston's clearances returned to normal in October 1723 only after word arrived that Low had abandoned the New England and Newfoundland coasts to sail for the Western Islands. Unlike other pirates, Low had terrified Boston's merchants and ship captains and his presence on the coast decreased Boston's clearances by almost 20% from the previous year. Many merchants and ship captains appear to have waited till the subsequent year to set sail because clearances went from 485 in 1723 to 731 in 1724, an increase of 34% and the greatest increase recorded in Boston during the colonial period.⁷³

Boston continued to worry about Low after he departed the New England coast in late 1723. The *Boston News-letter* published every rumor of his whereabouts, tracking him to the Western Islands, the coast of Africa, and back to the West Indies. The town undoubtedly read with delight the story of Low being captured by a fellow pirate and marooned on a West Indies island. But shortly after this tale, the *News-letter* reported that Ned Low was once again haunting the West Indies. More reliable sources arrived in New England indicating that most of Low's crew had abandoned him on account of his violence. Reports of Low continued unabated into 1726, three years after Low had last been on the New England coast. One such report noted that

⁷³ *Boston News-letter* 27 May 1717; "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter* 7 January 1717 – 29 December 1718 and 1 January 1722 – 31 December 1724; see also appendix, graph 1.

“Low and Spriggs were both Marooned, and were got among the Musketoo Indians” in the Bay of Honduras. In late June 1726, Low’s legend appeared to influence fellow pirates with William Fly’s crew teasing the captured seafarers of the sloop *Rachel* of Connecticut by telling them that “both Low & Spiggs were upon the Coast & waited to take Capt. Sterlings great Ship built at New London.” Alarmed, navy and merchant captains from New York to Boston began scouring the coast for the two infamous pirates, but they found nothing. A final rumor suggested that Low had been captured and executed in 1724 by the French, but the pirate’s end is shrouded in mystery.⁷⁴

Boston’s Atlantic world created Ned Low and vice versa. During Boston’s meteoric rise from 1700 to 1717 the port offered security for seafaring men like Low to settle down, work in the shipbuilding industry, marry, and have children. When these opportunities vanished after 1717, Boston’s waterfront laboring community quickly began to feel the effects. Low in particular was at a disadvantage. His status in Boston’s community rested on his wife and his wife’s family. His social connections in Boston evaporated with her death and, in addition to the decline in shipbuilding, likely led to his unemployment. He became rootless, and rootless men were well-suited for toiling in the lagoons and logwood groves of Belize to support the merchant-elites and the shrinking middle-class of waterfront artisans. In the Bay of Honduras, Low shed his respectable Boston identity and began ferociously attacking the Boston Atlantic economic system that no longer offered him a place. Piracy, ironically, also presented his only hope of reuniting with his daughter. Although Low earned Boston’s undivided attention and fear, the town’s leaders never recognized or acknowledged him as their creation. Yet the Reverend

⁷⁴ For reports on Low after he departed the North American coast see, *Boston Newsletter*, 18 October 1723 and 31 October 1723 and 19 March 1724 and 27 March 1724 and 7 May 1724 and 1 October 1724 and 8 October 1724 and 15 October 1724 and 11 February 1725; *Boston Gazette* 25 April 1726 and 27 June 1726; see, also Dow and Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast*, 216-217.

Cotton Mather, however, after many years of preaching to and talking with seafarers and pirates, began to comprehend the systemic injustices that led men like Low to eschew national and local ties.

Boston's relationship to the Golden Age of Piracy was reflected in the life of the port's most famous minister, Cotton Mather. In 1709, Mather called seafarers an "Ungodly & Vicious Generation" yet early during the Golden Age of Piracy he downgraded his assessment to "A wicked, stupid, abominable Generation." For the better part of his ministry, Mather had exerted great energies to inspire piety among sailors but his efforts proved futile. He lacked the experiences and knowledge that would have allowed him to sympathize with sailors' plight. Sailors in turn expressed discontentment with Mather's aggressive conversion tactics, and his joint efforts with the vice-admiralty courts to punish sailors for turning pirate. In the maritime world, Mather's name became infamous, mocked, and cursed. As Mather became more involved in the execution of sailors condemned for piracy during the period 1716-1726, their willingness to listen to his message decreased exponentially. Still, in his final sermon on and to the "Seafaring Tribe," Mather came to an important understanding about pirates and seafarers that eluded other elites around Atlantic – the violence of ship captains and the apathy of merchants encouraged sailors to turn pirate and inflict violence in return.⁷⁵

Mather's involvement with the seafaring tribe increased significantly in the last decade of his life due to the incarceration and trials of pirates. Mather found that there was a robust market for sermons filled with excitement, adventure, terror, and death. Naturally, tales of sailors turning

⁷⁵ This section on Cotton Mather and pirates is revised and used with permission from my article "Cotton Mather and Boston's 'Seafaring Tribe,'" *The New England Quarterly*, vol. LXXXV, no. 2 (June 2012). © 2012 by The New England Quarterly. All rights reserved; *The Sailours Companion and Counsellor*, A2; Mather, *Diary*, 2: 528. For a more detailed study of Mather's involvement and relationship with seafarers see, Pitt, "Cotton Mather and Boston's 'Seafaring Tribe,'" 222–252.

into vicious, murdering thieves caught the attention of booksellers in Boston, and around the Atlantic. Boston's status as a principal location for the execution of pirates only increased demand in the port city. Of course, Mather had already played a vital role in the creation of Boston's morbid literary culture with the executions of John Quelch and David Wallis.⁷⁶ He knew how well he could employ the drama of death as an instrument to reach the public, and in 1717, after capture and execution of sailors of Sam Bellamy's crew, he remarked, "May not I do well to give the Bookseller, something that may render the Condition of the Pirates, lately executed, profitable?"⁷⁷

Mather began work on a sermon that showed little sympathy for the audience he supposedly intended to aid. He was skeptical that merchant sailors had the will, or even desire, to resist becoming pirate. For instance, he berated the pirates of the *Whydah* who claimed to have been "*Forced Men*." For Mather, most sailors already had been corrupted by the abhorrent culture of seafaring. Pirates epitomized that culture. If sailors had pure hearts they would "have died a Martyr by the cruel Hands of your [their] Brethren [rather] than have become one of their Brethren." Sam Bellamy's crew had few forced men, validating Mather's cynicism. Seafaring men who constantly faced danger from physical injury, natural elements, foreign privateers, and now marauding pirates, however, had no desire to be lectured by a pious elite. Shortly after publishing the sermon, Mather complained bitterly that despite "All the Prayers, and all the Pains I have employ'd in a distinguishing Manner for their Good" seafarers "requite with making me

⁷⁶ David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Belief in Early New England*, (United States: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1989), 180-186; See Mather, *Faithful Warning to Prevent Fearful Judgments* and Mather, *The Sad Effects of Sin*.

⁷⁷ Mather possibly used the term "profitable" to mean spiritually profitable but without question tales of piracy provided the minister with a healthy income, as he knew well from past experience see, Mather, *Diary*, 2: 490; For the published sermon see, Cotton Mather, *Instructions to the Living, from the Conditions of the Dead* (Boston, Massachusetts: John Allen, 1717).

above any Man living the Object of their Malignity.” This did not dissuade the minister. He increased his outreach to – and chastisements of – seafarers and pirates.⁷⁸

If anyone had a right to fear pirates it was Cotton Mather. He involved himself in their business and prayed for their destruction as no other minister did during the Golden Age of Piracy. Even when pirate executions took place in ports other than Boston, Mather wrote the accompanying sermon.⁷⁹ And in May 1724, as the pirate captain John Phillips plagued New England waters, Mather led his congregation in prayer deploring “the glorious One do some remarkable Thing for the Destruction of the Pyrates, by which our Coast has been lately infested.” According to Mather, these prayers helped to instigate an uprising aboard John Phillips’ ship, the outcome of which was the capture of four pirates, John Rose Archer, William White, William Taylor, and William Phillips.⁸⁰

Pirates’ hatred of Mather undoubtedly grew from their hatred of Boston. After a visit with these pirates in their prison cells, Mather learned that his reputation among the maritime community extended to all corners of the Atlantic:

One of the first Things which the Pyrates, who are now so much the Terror of them that haunt the Sea, impose on their poor Captives, is; to curse Dr. M - [Mather]. The Pyrates now strangely fallen into the Hands of Justice here, make me the first Man, whose visits and Counsils and Prayers they beg for. Some of them under Sentence of Death, chuse to hear from me, the last Sermon they hear in the World.

The irony of this statement was lost on Mather. From the pirates’ perspective, Mather’s figurehead position in Boston executions strongly allied him with the British efforts to annihilate

⁷⁸ Mather, *Instructions to the Living, from the Conditions of the Dead*, 17-18. The *Boston News-Letter* bolstered the perception that sailors were unwilling to fight “their Brethren.” See *Boston News-Letter*, 16 June 1718; Mather, *Diary*, 2: 528.

⁷⁹ In 1723 twenty-six pirates were hanged in Newport, Rhode Island. Due to his reputation and experience in the execution of pirates, Mather was asked to write a sermon for the occasion see, Cotton Mather, *Useful Remarks: An Essay upon Remarkables in the Way of Wicked Men: A Sermon on the Tragical End, unto which the way of Twenty-Six Pirates Brought Them; At New Port on Rhode-Island, July 19, 1723* (New London, Conn., 1723).

⁸⁰ Mather, *Diary*, 2: 722; Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 341-351.

them through violence. Pirates, and many sailors, despised him for that involvement, and cursing and mocking him constituted a rejection of his authority; however, when captured, imprisoned, and facing the hangman's noose the only person in Boston that pirates knew to call on was Cotton Mather. The prospect of death, in addition to the loneliness of being far from family and friends, encouraged pirates to find solace in the conversation of the minister. In those final days before "The poor condemned Pyrates" stood before the gallows, Mather eased their anxiety by offering them his time and comfort. In so doing, he provided a charitable act for those individual sailors; yet any tangible influence Mather gained by his good deed died with the pirates.⁸¹

Mather had an agenda for living sailors and pirates, which he passed on through the last words of the pirates as they stood on the scaffold, looking out on the mass of spectators awaiting their death. Mather found the two condemned pirates from Phillips' crew, William White and John Rose Archer, especially pliable and apt conveyors of his message to both the maritime and terrestrial communities. Archer and White impressed the minister with their heartfelt confessions, seemingly sincere repentance, and willingness to accept uncritically Mather's fervent beliefs about corrupt maritime culture. Of course, the pirates hoped for a pardon due to good behavior, but apparently that did not enter Mather's mind.

For almost a month, Mather met with Archer and White. He filled their heads with the propaganda that he desired them to spout to the mass of people during the spectacle of their death. They did not disappoint. On the day of their execution, June 2, 1724, Archer and White stood penitently on the gallows before the large crowd. Together they warned "all People, and particularly young People" against committing the many sins they participated in as sailors and pirates. According to the *Boston News-Letter*, "One of 'em desired, That those that follow the Sea would take warning; and if any should be taken by Pirates, rather Dye than Consent to be of

⁸¹ Mather, *Diary*, 2: 729.

their Number.” Lastly, as Mather undoubtedly directed them, the two pirates articulated their aspiration that “the Sea-faring [tribe], may get Good by what they see this day befalling of us.” These directives could easily have come directly from the mouth of Mather, and most sailors observing the execution were savvy enough to realize it.⁸²

White and Archer also had particular life experiences that warranted individual comments from them. White was twenty-one and an inexperienced sailor/fisherman when he joined Phillips and three others to become pirate on August 29, 1723. Of the five men, he was “the only private Man in the whole crew,” meaning non-officer. Upon his capture in May of 1724, White expressed his remorse for disobeying his parents by going to sea. White’s parents tried to provide the rebellious young man with a good religious education. But instead White escaped to the sea where he learned to neglect “the publick Worship of God,” curse “the Name of God,” and drink excessive amounts of liquor. White’s experience led him to warn young men not to disobey their parents by joining the seafaring tribe.⁸³

Meanwhile, Archer was an older, more experienced sailor who served in Blackbeard’s pirate crew and worked as quartermaster in Phillips’ crew. Archer’s experience during the Golden Age of Piracy mirrored that of many other sailors who shifted between legitimate business and piracy, including the pirate Captain Phillips. In 1718 he left Blackbeard’s crew through what he deemed “the act of Graces.” Afterwards he worked aboard a fishing vessel off Newfoundland for six or seven years; however, when Phillips captured that vessel he “was easily drawn into the old Trade again.” Archer understood the maritime world that he had toiled in for many years, and that understanding allowed him to step outside the scripted lines Mather provided for him. Subsequently, with his final words Archer challenged captains to treat sailors

⁸² Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 341-342 and 351; *Boston News-Letter*, 4 June 1724.

⁸³ Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 351; Cotton Mather, *The Converted Sinner: The Nature of Conversion to Real & Vital PIETY* (Boston, Mass., 1724), 38.

humanely in order to prevent sailors from becoming drunks and turning pirate: “I could wish that Masters of Vessels would not use their Men with so much Severity, as many of them do, which exposes us to great Temptations.”⁸⁴

Despite Archer’s unscripted remarks, Mather remained inspired by the two pirate’s performance on the scaffold. In particular White impressed the minister by quoting a proverb from the Bible. According to Mather, when White learned that “his Dead Body was to be kept and hung in Iron in a Gibbet” he declared in reference to his disobedience to his parents, “*Now a Righteous GOD is going to fulfil that Word; THE EYE WHICH DESPISES TO OBEY THE MOTHER, THE RAVENS OF THE VALLEY SHALL PICK IT OUT, AND THE YOUNG EAGLES SHALL EAT IT.*”⁸⁵ With these remarks, White may have earned his “Dead Body” a reprieve from the iron gibbet. After the execution, the *Boston News-Letter* reported of Archer and White, “After their death they were in Boats conveyed down to an Island, where the abovesaid Quartermaster was hung up in Irons, to be a Spectacle, and so a Warning to others.” There was no mention of what became of White’s body.⁸⁶

Mather may have interceded on White’s behalf, as hinted at in his execution sermon, *The Converted Sinner: The Nature of Conversion to Real & Vital PIETY*. Mather believed the pirates had sincerely repented, and that his efforts had turned them to God. He proudly noted,

MANY Entertained Apprehensions, That the Pains that had been *taken*, with these Prisoners, (A Charity and Compassion in which *New England*, by the Report of Strangers, comes not behind any Country!) were not *Lost* upon them; and that these poor men may after all, be found among the Elect of GOD, in this Wondrous way brought home to Him.

⁸⁴ Mather, *The Converted Sinner*, 39; Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 351; Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 45 and 93.

⁸⁵ Mather, *The Converted Sinner*, 48-49.

⁸⁶ *Boston News-Letter*, 4 June 1724.

For twenty-five years sailors had disappointed Mather time and again. Their culture had infiltrated his home, causing his son to reject him in favor of an ungodly life at sea. The maritime world cursed, mocked, and threatened him. Yet in these two pirates Mather found hope. Archer and White listened to the minister, delivering his intended message for the young men of Boston and the seafaring tribe. Mather, in turn, acknowledged the challenge that Archer issued to vicious captains before his death, and when pirates found their way to Mather's doorstep again in 1726 he did not shy away from placing blame on those who deserved it.

On July 6, 1726 Mather arrived at the Boston gaol to meet with four pirates recently captured off the New England Coast, including William Fly, the captain of the pirate crew. He carried with him books of piety, including his own recent addition to the "*The Mariners Library*,"⁸⁷ *The Converted Sinner*. Buoyed by his success two years earlier with Archer and White, Mather contrived to use that experience to convince the newly arrived pirates that they needed to repent their crimes and provide a God-inspiring show for the mass of onlookers on the day of their execution. Fly, however, had a different script planned for his execution, although it was geared towards the same audience – sailors.

Mather entered the prison confident in his ability to manipulate the pirates into an admission of guilt. The pirates, he believed, had provided him with a delicious and useful irony. When William Fly and his followers mutinied against their previous captain, John Green, they dragged him up onto deck with the intent of throwing him overboard. Captain Green pleaded for his life declaring, "*for God's sake don't throw me over-board, if you do, I am for ever lost; Hell's the Portion of my Crimes.*"⁸⁸ Fly had little pity for the man and he mockingly stated,

⁸⁷ Mather, *Sailours Companion and Counsellor*, x.

⁸⁸ It is not hard to speculate why the Captain Green believed hell was his final destination, as he was the captain of slave ship, literally hell on earth see, Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking Press, 2007).

“since he’s so devilish godly, we’ll give him Time to say his Prayers, and I’ll be the Parson. Say after me. Lord, have Mercy on me. *Short Prayers are best, so no more Words, and over with him, my Lads.*” The pirates followed Fly’s order and threw Green overboard but he managed to grab hold of the mainsheet, according to Mather “to prolong his Time.” One of the “merciless Monsters” picked up a Cooper’s broad Ax to chop” off the unhappy Master’s Hand” and the slave ship captain “was swallowed up by the Sea.”⁸⁹

Mather exploited this gruesome tale to take the moral high ground with the pirates, beginning his discussion with them by asserting, “The poor men, whom you murdered, You hurried out of the world; You allow’d them no Space to repent. They begg’d at least for *little Time* if you would not be dissuaded from Killing them,” he continued by noting the irony that, “A Gracious GOD has not hurried you out of the world, but given you some time to prepare for your Deaths.” In addition to God’s clemency, Mather noted the generosity of the courts and Boston ministers in allowing the pirates time before their death, creating a distinction between the barbarous pirates and the “civilized” society. A recalcitrant Fly saw circumstances in a different light; for him dead was dead, and he had no intention of submitting to the authority of the courts that had sentenced him to death or to the ministers who badgered him to repent his sins.⁹⁰

As Daniel Williams argues, “Fly was more dangerous as a prisoner than he had been as a pirate. His refusal to repent represented a much greater refusal to recognize the sacred world that Boston had been established to protect.”⁹¹ Fly challenged Mather in a way that no other imprisoned pirate had before. For instance, when Mather asked Fly how he viewed the

⁸⁹ Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 608; Cotton Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea: A Remarkable Relation of Certain Pirates* (Boston, 1726), 1.

⁹⁰ Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea*, 6-7.

⁹¹ Daniel E. Williams, “Puritans and Pirates: A Confrontation between Cotton Mather and William Fly in 1726,” *Early American Literature* 22 (1987): 232-251, quote at 234.

government's decision to have them executed, Fly responded "*GOD reward them according to their Deserts.*" A thoroughly annoyed Mather retorted, "You must not go on in this Impiety," as if by submitting to the government's decision, Fly accepted God's will.⁹²

Even more troubling for Mather was Fly's declaration that he was innocent in the murder of Captain Green and the first mate, despite the overwhelming evidence that he had ordered their deaths. Furthermore, Fly refused to express any remorse for his actions. Indeed he blamed the captain and mate for their own untimely death: "*I shan't own myself Guilty of any Murder – Our Captain and his Mate used us Barbarously. We poor Men can't have Justice done us. There is nothing said to our Commanders, let them never so much abuse us, and use us like Dogs. But the poor Sailors ...*" At this point Mather interrupted Fly, deeply offended that the sailor aimed to justify the murder of the slave ship captain and his first mate. Yet Fly's justification echoed that of John Rose Archer, a fact Mather would have found difficult to ignore.⁹³

Still, Mather responded harshly to Fly's obstinacy, at one point stating, "*Fly*, I am astonished at your stupidity. I cannot understand you. I am sure, you don't understand yourself. I shall be better able, another time to reason with you." Fly aptly retorted, "*It is very strange that another should know more of me, than I do myself.*" If we extrapolate these two statements into the larger framework of Mather's relationship with the seafaring tribe, we catch a glimpse of the gulf between Mather and the maritime world. Although Mather correctly noted that he could not understand the experiences that led Fly to resist "civilized" society and the possibility of redemption with God, he arrogantly assumed that with time he could control the responses of the pirate. In Mather, sailors saw a pompous, sheltered man, who knew nothing of the hardships of

⁹² Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea*, 20.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

their existence, telling them how to live their lives. And for the first time, a sailor, in plain words, called Mather out for his overbearing presumptions.⁹⁴

Mather may have provided Fly with the tools and knowledge necessary for him to effectively resist and ridicule the minister and court. As Mather's first visit with the pirates came to a conclusion, he brought to their attention that he had brought books of piety with him, including his own *The Converted Sinner*. He told the pirates that *The Converted Sinner* "was occasion'd by the last Predecessors you had in the state and place you are now brought into" to which Mather records Fly smugly stating "*I read that Book before ever I was brought hither!*" It is conceivable that Mather fabricated this story to make it seem as though his work was widely read among sailors, but Fly's ability to irritate the minister and mock the proceedings against him suggests a concrete understanding of how pirate executions worked in Boston.⁹⁵ Fly may have even deliberately acted in direct opposition to the example set by Archer and White in *The Converted Sinner*. Mather certainly characterized him as their antithesis.⁹⁶

Mather's altercation with Fly had only one possible ending – Fly's dead body hanging in a gibbet as a grisly "Spectacle for the Warning of others, especially Sea-faring Men."⁹⁷ Yet Mather's increased exposure to sailors and pirates during the Golden Age of Piracy led to a profound change of heart in regards to his perception of the seafaring tribe. In 1709 Mather, heavily influenced by Josiah Woodward's declaration that sailors were irreligious savages, advocated violence as a means to control sailors behaviors and beliefs. However, by 1726 Mather's personal experiences with pirates such as Archer and Fly made him question captains'

⁹⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁵ One piece of evidence that may suggest that Mather invented this story is Charles Johnson's claim that Fly was illiterate; however Mather personally knew Fly and would have known his literacy level. It is also equally possible that Mather's *The Converted Sinner* was read aloud on board one of the vessels Fly worked see, Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 606.

⁹⁶ Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea*, 16-17.

⁹⁷ *Boston News-Letter*, 14 July 1726

use of violence and their overall treatment of sailors. Subsequently, Mather returned to the position he supported in *The Religious Marriner* (1699), when he reprimanded captains for their cruel treatment of sailors. In his sermon *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea* (1726), after admonishing sailors in his usual fashion, Mather turned his fiery attention to ship captains, emphatically stating, “I would presume upon an Address to the Masters of our Vessels, that they would not be too like the *Devil* in their *Barbarous Usage* of the *Men* that under them, and lay them under *Temptations* to do *Desperate Things*.” Mather continued his rebuke of captains by sarcastically remarking, “The *Men* must be used as *Rational Creatures*. Yea, Master you must Remember your MEN, - Don’t you call ‘em so?”⁹⁸

Mather’s critique of ship captains in *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea* drew heavily – and ironically – from the words and complaints of both Archer and Fly. He noted Archer’s insistence that poor treatment by captains led sailors to “great Temptations.”⁹⁹ Meanwhile, he appropriated Fly’s words that Captain Green and his first mate “*used us Barbarously*.” Mather also addressed Fly’s challenge that no one was willing to take the side of poor sailors in an attempt to stop captains from treating their men “*like Dogs*.” By acknowledging the pirates grievances and putting them in print, Mather changed his previous position that sailors and pirates were inhuman savages that warranted violent control. By 1726 he also realized that without fundamental changes in the treatment of sailors by *both* merchants and captains “a Pious, a Sober, a Serious, and a Prudent Generation” of sailors would never develop.¹⁰⁰

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⁹⁸ Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea*, 44-45.

⁹⁹ Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, 351.

¹⁰⁰ Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea*, 21 and 44; for Mather’s avocation of violence see, Mather, *Sailours Companion and Counsellor*.

Mather's last sermon to pirates and sailors came at the end of an era of violent upheaval on the Atlantic Ocean. By 1728 the well-ordered world of profit-seeking merchants, protected shipping lanes, cheap maritime labor, private property, and plantation slavery eclipsed the unruly, opportunistic, egalitarian, and commons-working vision of the seafarers and pirates. These men had built the Atlantic, and especially Boston's economy, through their hard labor on ships and in the lagoons of the Bays of Campeche and Honduras. For much of the seventeenth century, Boston had actively supported seafarers' vision for the Americas. Shortly after the 1689 revolution, however, the port shifted strategies, developing closer ties with London. From the perspective of merchants, shipbuilders, and politicians it was a brilliant move, at least in the short term. Boston became the vehicle whereby English goods and capital spread to underdeveloped frontier communities throughout the English Atlantic. Merchants developed networks of debtors up and down the North American coast and into the West Indies. Meanwhile, in Boston, the ship outfitting and building industries flourished, creating a strong middling-class of waterfront tradesmen tied to the merchant-elites through credit arrangements. Some of Boston's waterfront workers traded independence for this arrangement. Yet the town's lavish consumption of English commodities and importation of expensive materials for shipbuilding constantly kept Boston merchants indebted to London benefactors. The shortage of gold and silver required Boston to make remittances in naval stores and logwood, generating the exploitative conditions in the Bay of Campeche that helped cause the eruption of piracy in 1716.

Pirates and transatlantic seafarers understood Boston's role in the Atlantic economy better than most. After the hanging of Quelch and his crew in 1704 and probably before, they knew the port envisioned turning America into Europe, actively seeking to decrease opportunities for seafarers to earn a better living in order to earn better profits for its merchants

and shipbuilders. They also knew that Boston, unlike most other North American ports, would punish them for stepping beyond the hardened legal lines regarding quasi-privateering and piracy. After the hanging of Sam Bellamy's crew in 1717, pirates sought to exact a measure of revenge by burning and sinking Boston-owned vessels and terrorizing Boston ship captains. Boston likewise terrorized pirates by hunting them down and hanging them, leaving the corpses hanging in gibbets as examples to all seafarers. Although Cotton Mather had a contentious relationship with pirates, he abhorred the treatment sailors received at the hands of ship captains and merchants. He understood Boston's activities in the Atlantic world enough to see that the port's merchants and ship captains were complicit in the creation of pirates. He too lamented the profit-seeking, and in his eyes irreligious, culture that developed through closer ties to London after the 1689 revolution.

5.0 THE ATLANTIC LOGWOOD TRADE

The growth of Boston's Atlantic logwood trade coincided with the port's turning away from trade with pirates, poor treatment of its seafaring population, increased credit arrangements with London, and the rise of the shipbuilding industry. The logwood trade represented a monumental breakthrough in Boston's commerce with London. Almost from its founding in 1630 through the seventeenth century, Boston and its merchants had sought an acceptable balance of trade with England to reduce the flow of silver and gold leaving the colony. England had little use for New England's staple commodities, fish and timber. Boston merchants therefore created complicated arrangements with merchants in Newfoundland, West Indies, and Iberian Peninsula to direct remittances derived from those staples to their English creditors. Logwood, however, could be directly shipped to England and make an immediate impact as a dyewood capable of producing brilliant red, purple, and black dyes and stains for the emergent textile and furniture industries of Europe.

In the late 1690s, merchants, primarily from Boston, began employing their wage laboring seafarers as logwood cutters. Officers worked the men hard and had little sympathy for their illnesses or injuries. Their approach drastically reduced the labor costs of producing logwood, increasing profits for Boston merchants and ship captains. Those profits also subsidized Boston's consumption of English manufactured goods and spurred the port's shipbuilding industry. Boston sailors, however, experienced first-hand through the logwood trade the callousness of Atlantic commerce directed by ruthless, profit-seeking transatlantic merchants and ship captains.

Logwood's significance in England and Europe created value in Boston. Merchants began trading it locally to settle debts and exporting it to nearby colonial ports in payment for goods. Like sugar and tobacco, logwood became a viable currency. At various times during the eighteenth-century, Spanish attacks, pirates, local natives, and politics disrupted the logwood trade. At other times, the Atlantic market for logwood became glutted and the price dropped precipitously. These disruptions and price drops reverberated around the Atlantic, creating economic and social hardships in Boston and setting in motion political and military conflicts between empires. This chapter seeks to address a significant gap in our understanding of the Atlantic economy by focusing on the changing nature of maritime labor in the logwood trade and its connection to the economic rise of Boston as a major port city in the late seventeenth and early to mid-eighteenth centuries.¹

* * *

The English logwood trade began in earnest during the 1660s when privateers discovered that logwood would sell in Europe for £90 to £110 per ton. Initially, few English privateers actively cut logwood, preferring instead to steal it from Spanish vessels. By the early 1670s,

¹ The most significant studies on the logwood trade are Arthur M. Wilson, "The Logwood Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Douglas McKay (ed.), *Essays in the History of Modern Europe* (New York, 1936), 1–15; A. P. Thornton, "The English at Campeachy," *The Jamaican Historical Review*, 2 (1953): 27–38; Alan Craig, "Logwood as a Factor in the Settlement of British Honduras," *Caribbean Studies*, 9:1 (1969): 53–62; Gilbert M. Joseph, "British Loggers and Spanish Governors: The Logwood Trade and its Settlements in the Yucatan Peninsula: Part I," *Caribbean Studies* 14:2 (1974): 7–37; Gilbert M. Joseph, "British Loggers and Spanish Governors: The Logwood Trade and its Settlements in the Yucatan Peninsula: Part II," *Caribbean Studies* 15:4 (1976): 43–52; O. Nigel Bolland, *Colonialism and Resistance in Belize: Essays in Historical Sociology* (Barbados: University of West Indies Press, 2003), chap. 1 and 2; Daniel Finamore, "A Mariner's Utopia: Pirates and Logwood in the Bay of Honduras," in Russell K. Skowronek and Charles R. Ewen, *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2006): 64–78; Jesse Cromwell, "Life on the Margins: (Ex) Buccaneers and Spanish Subjects on the Campeche Logwood Periphery, 1660–1716," *Itinerario*, 33 (2009): 43–71; Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1660–1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 218–225. All of these studies neglect to identify the importance of Boston in the Atlantic logwood trade. Ross A. Newton's, "'Good and Kind Benefactors': British Logwood Merchants and Boston's Christ Church" *Early American Studies* 11(1): 15–36 highlights the Boston connection with the logwood trade during the late 1720s to the 1740s but does not explore the economic importance of logwood for Boston or its impact on the seafaring community.

active persecution by West Indies governors, pirate hunters, and the Royal Navy drove many pirates and privateers into the mosquito – and alligator – infested lagoons of the Bay of Campeche to chop logwood for a living. Still, the riches of the logwood trade represented a place of opportunity whereby common men could earn a decent living from their hard labor.²

William Dampier, an English privateer, explorer, logwood cutter, and naval officer, noted, the English logwood trade “had its Rise from the decay of Privateering.” Most of the privateers “thought it a dry Business to toil at Cutting Wood” in comparison to their previous employment. Nevertheless, these hardened, independent seafaring men preferred the dangerous and intense labor of logwood cutting over employment in the English merchant marine or Royal Navy. By 1675, the primary English settlement in the Bay of Campeche on the Island of Trist (modern day Isla del Carmen) had over 250 inhabitants, primarily ex-privateers.³ Trist provided an excellent central location for exchange. Large ships from Boston and England and sloops from Jamaica, Bermuda, and other West Indies locations anchored on the Northwest-side of the island whilst smaller vessels such as barks, pirogues, and canoes traversed the Laguna de Términos to the Southeast, carrying logwood from the mainland to the larger vessels.

The logwood cutters relied primarily on Jamaican and Boston seafarers and merchants to connect them to the wider Atlantic economy. Jamaican captains traded rum, sugar, and bills of exchange for logwood. Boston, meanwhile, traded all the aforementioned commodities in addition to important necessities such as food, tools, gunpowder, and naval stores for logwood and hides. Boston ship captains also sold the logwood cutters Indian slaves taken during King Phillip’s War (1675-1676). Very little cash exchanged hands in this informal trade, which

² Wilson, “The Logwood Trade,” 3-5.

³ John Masefield, ed., *Captain William Dampier: Dampier's Voyages*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and New York, 1906), 2: 149 and 155-156.

currency-deprived Boston merchants favored. Jamaican sloops carried their small cargoes of logwood back to Jamaica where it was sold to English ships for roughly £10 per ton. Bostonians, meanwhile, typically transported their logwood back to Boston and used their own ships to make transatlantic voyages to England, Amsterdam, Venice, and Leghorn, thereby cutting out the middleman and earning greater profits.

The lagoons and logwood groves of the Bay of Campeche provided an excellent frontier location for the seafarers to escape from serving on merchant vessels or Royal Navy ships. They formed a fairly egalitarian society, emulating life on board a pirate or privateer vessel. During the dry season (September to April/May), small crews of cutters entered the logwood groves and constructed huts raised on stakes and platforms above the two to three feet of water left from the wet season. As Dampier remarked, “the Land where the Logwood grows is so overflowed, that they step from their Beds into the Water perhaps two Foot deep, and continue standing in the wet all Day, till they go to bed again.” The labor of cutting logwood was separated into tasks: some men chopped down the densely knotted trees; others sawed and cut the felled trees “into convenient Logs;” and, finally, the most skilled men chipped the sap off the logs. According to Dampier, logwood crews typically labored Monday through Friday and took Saturday and Sunday off. They often hunted in their free time for meat and hides, which could also be sold to passing ships.

The logwood cutters earned shares of logwood based on the tasks they performed and their experience. The aforementioned chippers generally received a larger share. Boat owners also received larger shares, as the logwood crews required canoes or pirogues to traverse the swampy lagoons. The crew Dampier joined had already chopped, sawed, and chipped a hundred tons of logwood for a Boston ship captain. He therefore only earned a ton of logwood per month

to help carry the logwood to a nearby creek. Generally, in a democratic fashion, “every Man is left to his choice to carry what [logwood] he pleaseth, and commonly they agree very well about it: For they are contented to labour very hard.” As historian Michael Jarvis notes, individuals from the rest of the crew earned “at least £83 for nine months’ work,” more than quadruple the typical monthly wages of a common seaman.⁴

After harvesting their logwood and carrying it to Trist for the eagerly awaiting ship captains, the crews disbanded much like a ship’s company. There was one important exception – the power-relations between the ship captain and logwood cutter favored the latter. Prior to selling their logwood, the cutters expected a free day of punch at the ship captain’s expense. Afterwards, “every Man will pay honestly for what he drinks.” If the ship captain neglected this hallowed tradition, he would potentially receive substandard wood, or, even worse, “hollow Wood filled with dirt in the middle and both ends plugg’d.” The logwood cutters expected respect from ship captains for their hard labor and, unlike their seafaring brethren, they controlled a desirable commodity besides their labor. After receiving payment, most logwood men spent their earnings on weeks of debauchery in Trist before heading back into the lagoons with empty pockets. Even the rare “well-bred” logwood cutter would “squander away their Time and Money in Drinking and making a Bluster.” Despite the harsh working conditions of logwood cutting, the idea of accumulating wealth for a happy retirement rarely crossed the minds of these hardy men. They enjoyed freedom from oppressive ship captains, profit-seeking merchants, and controlling politicians on the margins of the Atlantic economy.⁵

⁴ Dampier, *Voyages*, 2: 178-182; Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade*, 222.

⁵ Dampier, *Voyages*, 2: 179 and 186.

The logwood cutters' way of life came at a price for the surrounding inhabitants. The logwood cutters attacked and plundered nearby Indian villages, enslaving the women to serve them in their crude huts and sending the men to Jamaica to work the sugar plantations. They also continued to harass nearby Spanish settlements and vessels in the bay. In 1678, French and English privateers attacked and captured the nearby Spanish town of Campeche. The Spanish believed the logwood men in the Bay guilty by association and reputation. They took decisive action by increasing their naval presence in the Bay, protesting the English presence on Trist to Parliament, and preparing plans to launch a major assault against the logwood cutters.⁶

Even as the Spanish made preparations to destroy the logwood cutters' camps, Lord Carlisle, the English governor in Jamaica, sought to seize control of the logwood trade from the unruly ex-privateers. As extensions of the pirates and privateers England desired to eradicate from the West Indies, the logwood cutters represented a new head of the "Many-Headed Hydra" that required immediate suppression. These former maritime men fashioned their own communities and hierarchies, thereby resisting control from typical sources of authority – the English navy, merchants, and ship captains. In January 1679, Carlisle wrote to London to explain that he "had many complaints from Trist in the Bay of Campeachy of the disorders owing to want of some government for the security of life and property; which once secured would profit this Island and settle the logwood trade." In effect, Carlisle desired to colonize Trist, its surrounding environs, and its inhabitants to constrain the freedom and profits of the logwood cutters. Planter and merchant elites, presumably from Jamaica, could then safely privatize the commons currently worked by the logwood cutters.⁷

⁶ Ibid., 2: 148 and 156-157.

⁷ Governor Lord Carlisle to Secretary Coventry, January 26, 1679, Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: America and the West Indies*, 45 vols. (London: Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1860-1994), vol. 10

King Charles II denied Carlisle's request to form a government in Trist but he also viewed the logwood cutters as a potential threat to England's imperial agenda. He ordered Carlisle to "discourage logwood-cutting in the Spanish dominions so far as you can, and endeavor to induce the privateers to plant in Jamaica." Carlisle offered logwood cutters in the Bay of Campeche and privateers "a double proportion of land if they would plant." England needed settled sugar planters, not independent laborers. The majority of logwood cutters appear to have ignored Carlisle's proposition only to fall victim to a major Spanish assault in April 1680. The Spanish captured more than 80 prisoners and killed many others. On May 2, 1680, one Spanish officer boasted to a captured Boston ship captain that he had seized twenty-two English vessels in the Bay of Campeche and the Spanish held 500 English prisoners. The Spanish had, for the moment, successfully eliminated the English logwood cutters from the Bay of Campeche.⁸

Boston's early involvement in the Bay of Campeche logwood trade in the 1670s and 80s extended naturally from the port's close connections with West Indies pirates, privateers, and Jamaican merchants. Boston and Trist developed a mutually beneficial and profitable relationship based on complementary deficiencies and shared interests. Boston's hinterland had failed to produce a desirable "cash crop" for English and European markets, which put its merchants at a great disadvantage in comparison to the planters and merchants in the Chesapeake and the West Indies. Boston merchants also faced chronic labor shortages and paid high wages so, unlike Jamaican merchants; they happily allowed the ex-privateers their fair asking price for

(1677-1680), nos. 869 (hereafter cited as *CSPC*); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2000).

⁸ The King to Governor Lord Carlisle, March 29, 1679, Governor Lord Carlisle to Secretary Coventry, August 13, 1679, and Deposition of Robert Oxe, December 30, 1680, *CSPC*, vol. 10 (1677-1680), nos. 950, 1094, and 1624; Journal and Narrative of Jonas Clough, November 23-24, 1681 and Memorial Delivered to Don Pedro Ronquillo, November 1681, *CSPC*, vol. 11 (1681-1685), nos. 303 and 307.

labor and logwood. Trist, despite having been settled by ex-privateers, lacked a waterfront community of skilled tradesmen and port facilities capable of building and maintaining a merchant fleet. Furthermore, they had no desire to have strong financial arrangements with English merchants/creditors, hence their preference for Jamaican bills of exchange. The logwood cutters also could not produce the tools and equipment required to chop down the dense logwood trees. Boston supplied all of these needs for the logwood cutters. Finally, both Bostonians and logwood cutters/ex-privateers resented England's increased meddling in colonial and maritime affairs.⁹

Dampier's journal reveals Boston's dominance of the Bay of Campeche logwood trade and close connections with the logwood cutters. Boston and New England ketches and ships accounted for twelve of the seventeen vessels Dampier identified by their homeport during his time in the Bay of Campeche. He mentioned four additional vessels without identifying their home port.¹⁰ Boston vessels' frequent stops at Trist ensured constant exchange and communication between the logwood cutters of Trist and the merchants and ship captains of Boston. Meanwhile, sick or injured logwood cutters often preferred Boston over Jamaica as location to recover. For instance, Dampier recalled an unfortunate Irish logwood cutter who voyaged all the way to Boston for treatment after an alligator bite mangled his leg. He spent the better part of a year healing there before returning to the Bay. He recovered "but went on limping ever after."¹¹

Logwood cutters also travelled to Boston for commercial reasons. One of Dampier's fellow crew members, a Scotsman named Duncan Campbell, departed the Bay of Campeche on a

⁹ Boston's poor hinterland is discussed in Darrett Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649* (New York: Norton, 1965), 189-191.

¹⁰ Dampier, *Voyages*, 2: 114, 125, 132, 142-143, 177, 183, 189-190, and 225.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2: 177.

Boston ship with orders from the rest of the crew to sell forty tons of the crew's logwood to procure "Flour, and such other Commodities that were proper to purchase Hides and Logwood in the Bay." Campbell, trained as a merchant, happily voyaged to Boston to avoid another grueling season of logwood cutting.

In an unusual twist of events, Campbell found the comforts of Boston far too compelling and never returned to the Bay of Campeche. He likely used the crew's 40 tons of logwood to enrich himself and make Boston his home. In short order, he became a prominent bookseller, joined the Scots' Charitable Society in 1684, and married into a wealthy Boston family. In 1686, the English traveler, John Dunton, described Campbell as "a brisk young Fellow, that dresses All-a-mode, and sets himself off to the best Advantage; and yet thrives apace." Campbell's connections to the radical side of the maritime community remained even after most Boston elites had turned away from trade with pirates. He befriended the infamous pirate, William Kidd, and, in 1699, when Kidd was captured in Boston, Campbell worked tirelessly on the pirate's behalf in exchange for a portion of his loot. In return, the governor, Lord Bellomont, ransacked Campbell's house and apprehended the stolen gold and silver. Undoubtedly, very few ex-logwood cutters had a career like Duncan Campbell but it seems possible that many of them settled in Boston and labored in the maritime trades, especially after the Spanish destroyed Trist in 1680.¹²

The economics and harsh environment of the logwood trade empowered logwood cutters in negotiating with Boston merchants and ship captains, creating common interests and

¹² Ibid., 2: 186; The connection between Duncan Campbell the logwood cutter and Duncan Campbell the Boston bookseller has not been made before. Dampier mentions that Campbell had been trained as a merchant before coming to the Bay of Campeche, explaining his sudden transformation and success upon arriving in Boston. George Emery Littlefield, *Early Boston Booksellers 1642-1711* (Boston: The Club of Odd Volumes, 1900), 131-136; John Dunton, *Letters from New England, 1686*, (Boston: Prince Society, 1867), 80; Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 177, 180-181, and 231.

cooperation. In the 1670s and 80s, Bostonians had no desire to toil at logwood cutting and their few experiences off their ships in the Bay of Campeche taught them caution. Through hunting excursions, Boston ship captains and sailors discovered that the logwood cutters inhabited a treacherous environment that required experience, knowledge, and skill to navigate. Some Boston mariners never returned from those hunting excursions while others suffered from severe dehydration and would have died without aid. Boston ship captains therefore arranged mutually beneficial long-term contracts with logwood crews to cut large cargoes of wood. As previously mentioned, Dampier joined a crew that was indebted in bonds to cut one hundred tons of logwood for a Boston ship captain. The fact that the ex-privateers/logwood men honored their obligations suggests they had received an agreeable payment in advance for their labor and hoped to maintain positive financial arrangements with the Boston ship captain and his backing merchant. In 1678, however, a Captain Gibbs from Boston contrived to undermine typical arrangements with the ex-privateers by forcing twenty Indian slaves taken during King Philip's War to cut logwood for him in the Bay of Campeche. After a week, the experiment abruptly ended when the Indians killed Gibbs "and marched off, designing to return to their own Country by Land." For almost twenty years thereafter, Boston's merchants and seafarers were content to leave the logwood cutting to the ex-privateers.¹³

Boston's reliance on the logwood trade far exceeded that of the logwood cutters other trade partners, thereby ensuring fair dealings. For Jamaica, logwood supplemented the far more important trade in sugar. Lord Carlisle may have been slightly disappointed when the king refused to allow official colonization of Trist in 1679 but the decision had very little economic impact on the increasing wealth of the sugar colony. Conversely, the logwood trade transformed

¹³ Dampier, *Voyages*, 2: 183-185 and 225.

Boston's commerce with London. For decades, New England had sought an acceptable balance of trade with England to reduce the flow of silver and gold leaving the colony and freedom from debt. As historian Bernard Bailyn observed, "Debts to English merchants represented to them a mortgage on their hopes for a free life in the New World." They dabbled in the fur trade; built ironworks to remove their dependency on English manufacture goods; and grew hemp to lessen demand for English textiles. All of these efforts failed to generate the desired results.¹⁴

The logwood trade, at least temporarily, enabled Boston merchants to escape their trade imbalance with England. For example, in 1678, John Usher, one of Boston's most prominent transatlantic merchants, had fallen behind on his accounts with London business partner John Ive. In March 1678, he owed Ive £373. According to merchant custom, he allowed Ive to charge interest because the debt had been outstanding for beyond the agreed upon terms, generally six to twelve months. During March 1679, however, three of Usher's vessels arrived carrying 2166 sticks, roughly 25-35 tons, of logwood. These rather small cargoes of logwood amounted to £258 and, in addition a large bill of exchange, more than balanced Usher's account with Ive. The destruction of Trist by the Spanish put a halt to Usher's short-lived prosperity based on the logwood trade. Usher therefore once again owed Ive over £300 in 1685. Usher, in desperation and without a viable commodity to trade, had his dear old mother pay Ive £312 to settle his debts in 1686. John Usher, along with many of Boston's most eminent merchants, would reenter the logwood trade in the mid-1690s to once again help alleviate Boston merchants' massive debts to London merchants.¹⁵

¹⁴ Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press, 1979), chap. 3, quote at 61.

¹⁵ "John Ive accounts with John Usher, 1678-81 and 1685-1686," Jeffries Family Papers, box 2 and box 15, vol. 16, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter cited as MHS).

Privateers resettled Trist in 1682 but the logwood trade continued to suffer from Spanish depredations and political upheaval in the English Atlantic world. Boston's logwood trade likewise dwindled as the Andros government and Edward Randolph imposed restrictions on trade and merchants attempting to ship logwood directly to European ports outside of England. King William's War (1689-1697) further disrupted the logwood trade. Many logwood cutters abandoned Trist to pursue privateering opportunities. On the positive side, however, England's alliance with Spain during the war alleviated attacks on the remaining logwood cutters. Still, Boston shippers faced a swarm of French privateers in the West Indies and considered the logwood trade too risky. Indeed, French privateers seized an estimated 4,000 English vessels during King William's War, far more than their English counterparts.¹⁶ With the end of the war in 1697, Boston's elite merchants such as Samuel Lillie, Penn Townsend, Andrew Belcher, David Jeffries, and John Usher entered the logwood trade with new purpose and, more importantly, new strategies. These strategies depended on increased exploitation of Boston's seafaring community.

In the late 1690s, Boston merchants began to wring greater profits out of the logwood trade by employing their maritime laborers as logwood cutters rather than purchasing logwood from the ex-privateers settled at Trist. Crews ranged from just 6 to 30 men and they were paid at the standard rate of a common seafarer in Boston, roughly £3 per month Massachusetts currency. Boston's elite merchants favored larger ships with twenty-five to thirty men and frequently sent a sloop or a brig as a tender with an additional six to ten men. Once the crew had filled the ship's hold with wood they would sail for Europe, generally Amsterdam, where logwood sold at high prices for most of the eighteenth century. The tender often returned to Boston with its smaller

¹⁶ Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (London: Macmillan & CO LTD, 1962), 315.

load of logwood to pay local debts and re-export to the London market. This new approach to the logwood and European trade compelled Boston merchants to invest heavily in the construction of larger ships, from 120-400 tons. Shipbuilding, as is discussed in the next chapter, transformed Boston's local economy and favored stable credit relationships with waterfront tradesmen.

The logwood trade required strict oversight by ship captains and mates to manage their crews for extremely long and arduous voyages that combined months of logwood cutting with months of sailing. Boston merchants rewarded officers for their efforts. Mates received a high wage of £4 per month and a one ton privilege of logwood. Ship captains received a typical wage of £6 per month but also a lucrative one ton out of every twenty tons of logwood sold in Europe. Through this incentive merchants ensured ship captains' cooperation in working their seafarers hard to complete the full cargo of logwood. These large scale operations involving large sums of money, however, caused conflict between seafarers, officers, and their merchant employers, resulting in a rash of court cases from 1699 to 1707. In particular, three Bay of Campeche voyages which made their way into the Suffolk County Court, *Faneuil v. Beale* (1704)/*Beale v. Townsend and Co.* (1705), *Minot v. Miles* (1702), and *Kemble v. Lillie* (1704), uniquely detail Boston's new and changing labor arrangements in the logwood trade and the conflict arising from those arrangements.¹⁷

In the fall 1699, two Boston ship captains, Aaron Beale and John Miles, prepared their vessels for their nearly identical intended voyages of Boston to the West Indies (Antigua and Jamaica) to the Bay of Campeche to Amsterdam and back to Boston. They were both loaded with cargoes of fish, wood, saws, and axes meant for both the West Indies and Bay of Campeche

¹⁷ For the wages of mates and ship captains see, Penn Townsend and Co. Orders to Aaron Beale, October 3, 1699, Massachusetts Archives Collection, 328 vols. (hereafter cited as Mass. Arch.), 62: 322 and Josiah Minot v. John Miles (1702), Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas Record Books, 1701-1706 (hereafter cited as SCCPRB), Massachusetts State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA).

markets. Both had large crews and intended to cut their own logwood for the Amsterdam market. Both voyages took over a year to complete and included at least two months in the Bay of Campeche. The results of the voyages, and the subsequent court cases, however, differed greatly. Beale's case reflected the high expectations of Boston merchants for their new arrangements in the Bay of Campeche while Miles's case highlighted the new potential for conflict and disagreements between captain and crew in harvesting logwood.

Beale set sail in the ship *St. William* from Boston on October 2, 1699 with a crew of 25 men and in company with a consort sloop crewed by 6 men. The owners intended for the sloop to shuttle supplies from Jamaica for the men cutting logwood and to freight and sell possible surplus logwood to other ships trading near Trist. Boston merchants knew the harsh conditions of chopping logwood in the Bay of Campeche and the very real possibility of sickness, injury, or death to their seafaring men. Beale therefore had permission from his owners to draw bills of exchange on their account with Jamaican merchant Charles Hobby to purchase logwood "if through sickness or death of your men, you cannot cut your full loading of wood." The merchants' carefully laid schemes lasted until the ship and sloop set sail. A severe storm separated the two vessels within a few days of their departure. The sloop was thrown off course and eventually seized by the French near San-Domingue. Beale, meanwhile, continued to Jamaica where he unloaded Charles Hobby's commissioned goods. Further disaster struck the voyage when five crew members deserted rather than spend months chopping logwood. Indeed, the common seamen may have only just discovered Beale's intention to cut logwood in the Bay of Campeche upon arrival in Jamaica.¹⁸

¹⁸ Penn Townsend and Co. Orders to Aaron Beale, October 3, 1699, Mass. Arch., 62: 322; Depositions of Richard James and Benjamin Girdler, Suffolk County Supreme Judicial Court Files (hereafter cited as SCSJCF), MSA, case no. 6112.

The deserters perhaps made a poor decision; upon arrival at Trist, according to seafarer Richard James, the entire crew suddenly fell sick, “which rendered it impossible to load the said ship ourselves.” Suspiciously, none of the crew died from the illness nor does it appear the men from the ship ever entered the lagoons to cut wood. For decades merchants and Royal Navy captains complained that seafarers feigned illness to shirk their duties to the detriment of pocketbooks and security. It is difficult for historians to discern the accuracy of these accusations; however, in this case, the Boston seafarers had strong motivation to resist merchants’ new ploy to exploit their labor in logwood cutting. Captain Beale’s difficulties with desertion in Jamaica may have also forced him to inform the remaining crew members that he had permission to purchase logwood if sickness befell them. Such courtesy did not extend to the men of the sloop who had managed to extract themselves from the French and make their way to Trist. According to the sloop’s commander, Benjamin Girdler, Beale, contrary to the sloop’s orders, “forced” him and his men “into the Laggoons” to cut logwood upon their arrival at Trist. Girdler made no mention of illness among Beale’s ship crew in his deposition, further suggesting the *St. William’s* crew feigned their illness to remain on board their ship.¹⁹

With the *St. William’s* crew too “sick” to work, Beale used the authority granted to him by his employers to purchase logwood from the local cutters. In so doing, he set in motion a series of complicated economic exchanges, which resulted in lengthy recriminations and legal action. Beale’s court cases underscore the precariousness of newly developing credit arrangements in the Atlantic world. To complete his load of logwood, Beale drew a bill of exchange on Charles Hobby and his employers account with him for £137:7 Jamaican currency to pay a Thomas Ashendon in Trist. Ashendon, meanwhile, owed a debt to Boston merchant

¹⁹ Depositions of Richard James and Benjamin Girdler, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 6112.

Andrew Faneuil and instead of wasting months sending the bill to Hobby and waiting for a return response, he endorsed it, made the bill payable to Faneuil, and sent it Boston. Faneuil then sent the bill to Hobby for payment or credit. Hobby promptly refused to honor the bill. Faneuil subsequently sued Beale in 1704 as the drawer of the bill and won the case.²⁰

Beale, in turn, sued his merchant employers, Penn Townsend, Samuel Lillie, Samuel Checkley, and John Ballantine. He maintained in his prosecution that he followed orders in purchasing logwood on their account with Charles Hobby. The court agreed and awarded Beale the money he had been forced to pay Faneuil. Beale's employers appealed the case, undoubtedly hoping to convince the court that Beale had failed to do his utmost to have the crew cut the logwood instead of rely on local cutters. The court once again disagreed, citing the merchants' orders as the primary justification for their decision.²¹

These four powerful merchants did not take kindly to Beale's victory. In particular, Samuel Lillie appears to have exacted a measure of revenge. In 1701, right after Beale's return to Boston, Lillie had hired Beale to return to the Bay of Campeche in his ship *Dolphin*. At Trist, Beale drew a bill of exchange on Lillie to pay for supplies from fellow Boston ship captain, Thomas Gwin. Lillie refused to honor this common commercial practice, remarking that "he would neither accept nor pay said Bill." The court hauled Beale back into court. In this case, Beale did not have direct orders to purchase supplies for his ship or men and lost the case. He failed to pay Gwin and court costs of £19:8:8 in the allotted time frame. The court had him arrested and committed to jail as Gwin's debtor. Boston merchants in the logwood trade swiftly

²⁰ Bills of Exchange and Bill Protest, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 6112; Andrew Faneuil v. Aaron Beale (1704) and Aaron Beale v. Penn Townsend and Co. (1704-1705), SCCCPRB, 1701-1706, MSA.

²¹ Andrew Faneuil v. Aaron Beale (1704) and Aaron Beale v. Penn Townsend and Co. (1704), SCCCPRB, 1701-1706, MSA; Andrew Faneuil v. Aaron Beale (1704) and Aaron Beale v. Penn Townsend and Co. (1705), SCSJCF, MSA, case nos. 6112, 6321, and 6750.

learned to write vague orders to ensure that their ship captains and seafarers could not escape the lagoons so easily. Furthermore, despite losing their initial case to Beale, the logwood merchants indicated to their ship captains that failure would result in years of litigation.²²

Boston's logwood merchants also sought out hard-driving masters who could manage their large crews effectively and ensure obedience in the lagoons. In December of 1699, shortly after merchants began using Boston sailors as logwood cutters, Reverend Cotton Mather remarked on ship captains' mounting ill-treatment of Boston seafarers: "Alas, Alas, How hardly have they [sailors] been used? What Cruelties have many of them suffered; not only from the Hands of cruel *Enemies* abroad, but also from some of their own *Commanders* and *Officers* in their own *Ships* at Home?"²³ John Miles, who made his first voyage to the Bay of Campeche a month after Aaron Beale, exemplified the sort of ship captain that Mather reproved. Miles ruled his men with a combination of swagger, favors, and intimidation that inspired both fear and loyalty. In 1707, his overzealous use of violence landed him in prison when he murdered his boatswain, George Barley, in Kinsale, Ireland.²⁴ Miles's violent and controlling temperament perfectly suited Boston merchants' Bay of Campeche logwood scheme.

In contrast to Aaron Beale's voyage, Miles's 1699 adventure to the Bay of Campeche on board the ship *Swallow* satisfied Boston merchants' new expectations for the logwood trade. Miles understood that Boston seafarers had little motivation to chop logwood for the wages of common seamen. He therefore ensured his own success by employing Indian and "negro" slaves

²² Thomas Gwin v. Aaron Beale (1704) and Thomas Gwin v. William Beale (1704), SCCCPRB, 1701-1706, MSA; Thomas Gwin v. Aaron Beale (1704) and Thomas Gwin v. William Beale, SCSJCF, MSA, case nos. 6118 and 6341.

²³ Cotton Mather, *The Religious Marriner: A Brief Discourse Tending to Direct the course of Seamen In those points of Religion which may bring them to the port of Eternal Happiness* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1700), 37.

²⁴ Miles escaped Kinsale but found his own violent death in 1710 during Boston's naval assault of Port Royal, Nova Scotia see, *Unity Papers*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 18, MHS.

in addition to his crew. He even owned some of the slaves. The slaves were assigned the most unpleasant tasks of logwood cutting, rendering the lagoons tolerable for the seafarers.²⁵

Once in the lagoons, the chief mate, Josiah Minot, took charge of operations. He had the logwood crew build their “barkudeer,” or barracks, adjacent to two other Boston-based crews led by John Viall, Captain John Stevens’s mate, and Captain William Ball. The barracks was a large building assembled to house the entire crew rather than the small, individually inhabited huts that William Dampier describes in his account of the ex-privateers logwood camps. The change was significant; the barracks mirrored conditions on board a merchant vessel. The command hierarchies remained. The cramped space and lack of privacy reminded the men that their sole purpose was to extract logwood and return to the ship to carry out their duties as common seamen. Also like vessels at sea or in port, the proximity of other logwood crews helped ease tensions, as crews frequently interacted, shared news, supplies, and merriment.

For Minot, these neighborly interactions allowed him to further his Boston and maritime contacts and reputation. He freely gave John Viall’s crew food when their own ship captain neglected to send them supplies. When Miles sent turtles to his crew, Minot would “Invite the adjacent Lagooners to eat of the same and deprive the said Miles men.” The ambitious chief mate made unequal trades to curry favor with Captain William Ball, including giving the captain one hundred biscuits for one bottle of rum. In addition to food and supplies, Minot exploited his power over the *Swallow*’s slaves to employ them in filling Captain Ball’s quota of logwood at the expense of cutting wood for Miles. One resentful crew member testified that Minot also used the slaves for his own advantage: “the said Minott did cause Indian Joseph and Mr. Phillips’ negro to cut wood for him the said Minot on Saturdays in the afternoon.” Despite these self-

²⁵ Deposition of John Jones, March 18, 1701, Mass. Arch., 62: 367.

serving actions, Minot managed to secure the support of the majority of the crew and his fellow Bostonians. They complimented Minot for working hard alongside his men, observing that “In the Bay of Campeche he [Minot] used his best endeavours to promote the good of the voyage.” Viall, meanwhile, expressed gratitude for Minot’s kindness, even as he noted that Boston logwood cutting crews customarily practiced such “neighborly kindness” in the unforgiving lagoons of the Bay of Campeche.²⁶

Captain Miles’s actions, inactions, and words further cemented the crew’s endorsement of Minot. Even with a cadre of slaves to support them, the chief mate and most of the crew became increasingly embittered towards their captain. Miles never shared in the discomforts of the lagoons to oversee the crew’s activities. He instead spent much of his time hunting for beef and turtles, some of which he sent to the men cutting logwood. He managed supplies, directed the ship’s tender, the sloop *Dolphin*, and sent from the comfort of his cabin on board the *Swallow* lofty orders up into the lagoons to increase the production of logwood. One such order infuriated the crew; Captain Miles directed Peter Cutler “to go into the Lagoons and tell the sd Minott to cause our people to work on Saturdays, in the afternoon, which I did.” In the 1670s and 80s, the ex-pirates and privateers typically took Saturday’s to hunt. Boston’s new logwood regime forced the crews to work on Saturday mornings as well. John Viall confirmed that “Saturdays in the afternoon were always allowed our gang and all others that I knew being a Custome.” Still not satisfied with the production of Minot’s crew, the pampered Miles entered the lagoons to verbally chastise the overworked crew. One crew member heard Miles say “we were Lazy rogues and did not Earne our Victualls.” Minot defended his crew, angrily telling the captain “That his men had Cutt as much wood or more than any men in the Lagoons.” Minot had reason

²⁶ Depositions of John Jones and John Viall, March 18, 1701, and Samuel Hart, May 26, 1701, Mass. Arch., 62: 367-368 and 371.

to stand by his crew's hard labor; they had managed to cut over 140 tons of logwood in ten weeks.²⁷

Miles's order for the crew to work on Saturday afternoons and disparaging words evoked the seafarers "Spirit of Rebellion." Discontent in the lagoons grew and, in a blatant act of defiance, Minot "had drawn up a paper to oblige the men not to Cutt any Logwood for the Loading of sd. Ship after the fifteenth day of May: and would have persuaded the men to set their hands to sd paper." One of the crew members claimed Minot called this paper a "Round Robin" and noted "some of the cutters had subscribed." Sailors employed round robins to plan and foment mutiny among crews. Participants would write or mark their names in circle to hide the identity of the leaders. Miles, however, succeeded in coercing his crew to fill the *Swallow's* cargo of logwood prior to the deadline, thwarting any outright rebelliousness. The ship set sail for Amsterdam in company with the sloop *Dolphin*, which would eventually break company and sail for Boston. Once at sea, Miles had Minot under his tyrannical and violent thumb. The two men engaged in a heated debate in front of the crew over transactions in the lagoons. Crew members observed "the sd Myles strike the sd Minott severall blows with his Cane and thereupon bid the people take notice he [Minot] was no longer his mate" and "Grievously beat him [Minot] with his cane many blows." In a second quarrel, Miles again called for his cane but Minot defended himself with a pair of pistols, remarking that no man would strike him again. Miles stayed his hand for the moment.²⁸

²⁷ Depositions of John Viall, March 18, 1701, and Peter Cutler, March 20, 1701, Mass. Arch., 62: 368-369; Deposition of Ephraim Nichols, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 4992.

²⁸ Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1987), chap. 5; Deposition of Peter Cutler, March 20, 1701, Mass. Arch., 62: 369; Deposition of Ephraim Nichols, SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 4992. For "Round Robin" see, Deposition of John Scott, March 10, 1702, Mass. Arch., 62: 435-36.

Minot's life might have ended as abruptly as George Barley's in 1707 had Miles not feared his powerful family connections in Boston, which included Stephen Minot, a well-connected and wealthy merchant. Nevertheless, Miles had no intention of letting Minot continue to challenge his authority unpunished. He forced Minot off of his ship and onto the *Dolphin* as the two vessels parted. As the seafarers carried Minot off the ship, he screamed at Miles to pay his wages and transfer his ton of logwood off the ship. Miles foolishly failed to listen to Minot. Upon his return to Boston, Minot immediately enlisted his brother Stephen to safeguard his own reputation and initiate a lawsuit. Miles returned from Amsterdam with the gratitude of his merchant employers but he faced three separate charges relating to his treatment of Minot. With the exception of one crew member, the crew's depositions supported Minot's account and the chief mate won every verdict. Minot's connections undoubtedly played a role in his victory but, more importantly, Boston courts still sympathized with "neighborly kindness" and fair treatment.²⁹ The court cases *Faneuil v. Beale/Beale v. Townsend and Co.* and *Minot v. Miles* originated from opposite parties but both reflected Boston merchants' desire for their ship captains to focus on the profits of the logwood trade rather than the customary treatment of the Boston's seafaring community.

By employing their seafarers as logwood cutters, Boston merchants managed to decrease labor costs for producing logwood almost seventy-five percent from the pre-war period; however, they still remained unsatisfied. During the interwar period of 1697-1702, production of logwood skyrocketed due to the new tactics employed by Boston merchants, driving down prices in England and Europe. In 1703, John Ive of London wrote John Usher of Boston to explain that "Logwood is exceedingly low" at "about £13 per Tun." Logwood sold for roughly £10 per ton

²⁹ Josiah Minot v. John Miles (1702), SCCCPRB, 1701-1706, MSA.

Mass. currency in Boston, which meant, with the cost of shipping, the sale of logwood in England failed to settle debts in the same manner as it had in the past. Direct shipment from the Bay of Campeche increased profits but many Boston logwood merchants continued to ship logwood to Boston in order to settle local debts and balance account books at home rather than using cash. Logwood's ability to act as a currency in Boston rested on its value in London. Logwood merchants, therefore, had to find new solutions to maintain their power and status within the local community.³⁰

As early as summer 1701, Boston merchants began forming new labor arrangements for the logwood trade to secure lower labor costs and risks. Instead of employing relatively high paid and skilled sailors in cutting wood, merchants sought to harness Boston's growing multitudes of unskilled and impoverished labor. King William's War had displaced many woodsmen and farmers on the Maine and New Hampshire frontier and, as Sir Henry Ashurst noted, created a multitude of unemployed English soldiers suitable to replace New England's loss of manpower during the war. Maritime men, generally ship captains, familiar with the logwood trade saw opportunity in organizing these desperate men into logwood cutting crews in Boston and forming agreements with logwood merchants. The articles of agreement for these new ventures read like an indentured servitude agreement, laying out time of employment and respective responsibilities. For example, Joseph Kemble and William Lane, both identified as mariners, agreed to terms with merchant Samuel Lillie to work in the Bay of Campeche for eight months and give him half of the logwood their crew produced. In return, Lillie provided free transportation to the Bay of Campeche and back to Boston for Kemble, Lane, and twelve "hands." He also supplied the crew with saws, axes, and "materials" necessary to cut logwood

³⁰ John Ive to John Usher, November 11, 1703, Jeffries Family Papers, box 2, MHS; Ship *Two Brothers* Account of the Bay Voyage, 1701, Jeffries Family Papers, box 15, MHS.

along with their provisions while working in the Bay of Campeche. Kemble and Lane were responsible for paying their crew's wages, freight on their one-half share of the logwood, and for provisions during the voyage to-and-fro.³¹

This arrangement appeared to be a win-win situation for Lillie, Kemble, and Lane. Lillie reduced his overhead costs by not paying wages to captains and ship crews to cut logwood. Captains Kemble and Lane, meanwhile, received the capital in tools and transportation that they required. Kemble and Lane hired their twelve man cutter crew for an average wage of 31.5 shillings or £1:11:6 Massachusetts currency (£1:4:6 pounds sterling) per month, roughly half the wage of a common seaman sailing out of Boston at the time. These low wages reveal that Kemble and Lane drew their crew from outside of the maritime community, or at least outside of skilled seamen who could easily find employment for much higher pay. The major losers in this arrangement were the laborers Kemble and Lane hired and the self-employed logwood cutters in the Bay of Campeche who now had to compete with wage labor even cheaper than seafarers.³²

The low wages of Kemble's and Lane's crew drastically cut the per ton cost of producing logwood despite their poor results. If Kemble and Lane's accounts are accurate, their twelve man crew only managed to cut 36 tons of logwood during their seven month stint in the Bay of Campeche. This paltry number is undoubtedly false, and Kemble and Lane took advantage of their distance from Lillie to ship additional logwood on their own account. Samuel Lillie certainly doubted Kemble and Lane's crew cut only 36 tons of logwood when 100 tons should have been easily possible with a twelve-man crew. He refused to honor his agreement and kept the entire 36 tons Kemble and Lane shipped to him in Boston. The ensuing litigation, however,

³¹ See Articles of Agreement in Joseph Kemble v. Samuel Lillie (1704), SCSJCF, MSA, case nos. 5557 and 5760.

³² Joseph Kemble and William Lane Accounts and Joseph Kemble v. Samuel Lillie (1704), SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 5557.

avored Kemble. Even if Kemble and Lane accurately represented their production numbers, the labor costs of Kemble and Lane's crew amounted to a rate of £3:9:0 Massachusetts currency (£2:14:0 sterling) per ton of logwood. This was far lower than other forms of labor in the logwood trade.³³

In 1675, the five man crew William Dampier worked for managed to cut 100 tons of logwood in almost the same amount of time as Kemble's and Lane's crew. They individually earned close to £10 sterling per month, or 88% more than Kemble's and Lane's cutters, and sold a ton of logwood for between £5 and £25 sterling. Granted, individual logwood cutters during the 1670s and 80s had far more independence and experience than these newly formed Boston crews. They also had monetary incentive to work hard. Meanwhile, a Boston ship with a 27 man crew, similar to John Mile's crew in 1699, produced logwood for approximately £1 sterling per ton more than Kemble's cutter crew.³⁴ With labor costs so drastically reduced, Boston logwood merchants could continue importing logwood into Boston to settle debts whilst re-export merchants could tolerate the £13-14 sterling per ton that logwood sold for in England.³⁵

For much of Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), competing forms of labor coexisted in the lagoons surrounding Trist. Enough English and West Indies vessels voyaged to the Bay of Campeche to enable a small contingent of self-employed cutters to compete with Boston's seafaring wage and slave laborers. After the war, an armada of Boston vessels entered the Bay of Campeche. The lagoons swarmed with Boston woodcutting crews and their "Barkudeers"

³³ Ibid.; Joseph Kemble v. Samuel Lillie (1704), SCCCPRB, 1701-1706, MSA.

³⁴ Dampier, *Voyages*, 2: 178-182. The rough estimate for the labor cost per ton of logwood for a Boston ship crew derives from the average monthly wages of a 27 man crew in 1700, including officers (roughly £160 Mass. currency), a three month timespan in the Bay of Campeche, and a 125 ton ship (assumes 100 tons of logwood). Average Monthly Wage divided by Logwood/Time = Labor Cost per ton of Logwood. The use of slaves by Boston ship captains in the logwood trade may complicate the per ton average of logwood but seafaring slaves generally received a wage comparable to white common seafarers that was paid to their masters.

³⁵ For price of logwood in London in the early 1700's see, John Ive to John Usher, November 11, 1703, Jeffries Family Papers, box 2, MHS.

occupied many of the prime locations for easily gathering logwood. During the 1713-14 and 1714-15 logwood cutting seasons at least fifty-seven different Boston-based ship captains and their crews entered the Bay of Campeche to cut logwood. Many of these captains participated in both seasons. In March of 1714, the *Boston News-letter* reported that at least thirty-four New England ship captains, twenty-seven of which I have identified as Boston-based captains, had taken up residence in the Bay of Campeche. The *Boston News-letter's* shipping section also indicates an additional 9 Boston vessels returned from the Bay during the spring and summer of 1714, bringing the total number of known Boston-based vessels in the Bay of Campeche to thirty-six.³⁶

The *Boston News-letter's* entrances and clearances provide important insights into the types of vessels involved in the logwood trade. I have identified the vessel types of twenty-six of the thirty-six Boston-based vessels in the Bay of Campeche: ten ships (39%), five brigantines (19%), and eleven sloops (42%).³⁷ If we assume those percentages hold for all thirty-six vessels then Boston had fourteen ships (estimate 120 tons and twenty-five man crew), seven brigantines (estimate 70 tons and ten man crew), and fifteen sloops (estimate 50 tons and six man crew) in the Bay of Campeche during the 1713-1714 logwood cutting season. The estimated total tonnage amounts to 2920 tons of logwood, which would have amounted to 60% of the 4878 tons of

³⁶ The total number of Boston vessels in the Bay of Campeche during the 1714 logwood cutting season is probably higher. Many Boston vessels voyaged directly from the Bay of Campeche to Europe, which meant upon their arrival in Boston their last port of departure would not have reflected their time in the Bay of Campeche. Fortunately, the March 1714 report covered some of those captains. *Boston News-letter* 21 March 1714; "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter* 3 January 1714 – 27 December 1714.

³⁷ If I include the entrances and clearances of the 1712-13, 1713-14, and 1714-15 logwood seasons, I find 13 ships (37%), 9 brigantines (26%), 11 sloops (32%) involved in the trade so the percentages are fairly similar with brigantines being the only outlier. Of course, many of the ship captains and vessels are repeated each season. "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter* 4 January 1713 – 28 December 1713, 3 January 1714 – 27 December 1714, and 28 March 1715 – 19 December 1715. Note: The *Boston News-letter* in 1715 is missing a number of issues but those important to the logwood trade in the late spring and summer months are complete.

logwood imported into Great Britain in 1714. Meanwhile, we can estimate that close to 500 Boston seafarers participated in the 1713-14 logwood cutting season.³⁸

Boston merchants' zealous involvement in the Bay of Campeche logwood trade provoked anger and distress among the settled inhabitants. In the past, Boston vessels had provided the ex-privateers with most of their provisions but now Boston ship captains employed their own crews to obtain logwood. The sheer number of Boston sailors further strained local food supplies. In mid to late 1714, twenty-eight Boston vessels departed directly for the Bay of Campeche. Many others probably arrived from Jamaica. By June 1715, the local Baymen faced starvation, "Provisions being very scarce and extraordinary dear." In desperation, "near Two Hundred Men" turned pirate, causing widespread panic among the Boston crews. One Boston ship captain reported "that all Persons that can get away, carry what they have with them, and desert the Place, there was but one ship in the Bay when he came away." Boston ship captains scurried home after their new labor practices had kicked up a hornet's nest.³⁹

The famished Baymen turned pirates threatened all shipping in the Bay of Campeche but their primary target was the Spanish town of Campeche, which they promptly attacked. Their assault failed but they succeeded in once again drawing the attention of Spanish officials to the dangers posed by English logwood cutters in Trist and its surrounding lagoons. The Spanish mustered their naval strength to halt the Bay of Campeche logwood trade once and for all. In 1716, the Spanish allowed crews to enter the lagoons but after the dry season began attacking English vessels attempting to leave. According to one observer, "the Spaniards had taken several English Ships and Sloops, and cut off the most part of the Bay," another complained that the

³⁸ "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter* 4 January 1713 – 28 December 1713, 3 January 1714 – 27 December 1714; Wilson, "The Logwood Trade," 5.

³⁹ "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter* 3 January 1714 – 27 December 1714; *Boston News-letter* 19 September 1715.

“Bay has been Three times cut off this Summer.” On the last day of November, the Spanish orchestrated a massive assault similar to the one in 1680 that drove the logwood cutters from Trist for two years. This attack crippled Boston’s logwood trade, as “most of English Vessels taken in the Bay belong’d to Boston.” Boston merchants lost a minimum of eleven vessels and at least five of those eleven were large ships. The losses amounted to tens of thousands of pounds sterling. The Spanish swiftly moved to fortify Trist and blockade the lagoons. They moved twenty-four cannons ashore and “brought all things necessary for the settling of the same [Trist].” With the Spanish settlement of Trist, Boston merchants permanently lost access to the Bay of Campeche and its rich logwood trade.⁴⁰

News of the catastrophe reached Boston in early April 1717. The Reverend Cotton Mather sorrowfully reflected that “The grievous Losses and Sorrowes my Neighbors have lately suffered by the Way of the Sea, oblige me to Meditations peculiarly adapted for them.” As more bad news poured in the following week, he pronounced, “The late Calamities on our Vessels and Neighbours abroad, afford me Objects enough to engage my Compassions at home.” On April 15, 1717, the attack in the Bay of Campeche became personal for Mather when he learned that some of his seafaring relatives had been captured by the Spanish: “It is a very *dark* Time with many of the Flock. Especially in regard to Relatives and Interests abroad.” Fortunately for Mather, none of his relatives were killed or held in lengthy captivity. Mather’s family was well-connected, and most likely his relatives held positions as ship captains or officers. In late May,

⁴⁰ *Boston News-letter* 10 October 1715; *Boston News-letter* 25 June 1716 and 1 October 1716; *Boston News-letter* 1 April 1717; *Boston News-letter* 8 April 1717; List of vessels Surrendered in the Bay of Campechia, November 30, 1716 and Masters of Vessels in the Bay of Campechy to John Cample, December 10, 1716, CSPC, vol. 29 (1716-1717), nos. 484iii and 484x.

he happily reported that his “Relatives returned from a Captivity among the Spaniards.” Boston’s economic woes would not be so easily remedied.⁴¹

From 1697 to 1717, Boston merchants and ship captains had increasingly appropriated the logwood trade by reducing logwood cutters to mere wage laborers. Production of logwood skyrocketed and its price drastically declined, creating difficult economic conditions for independent logwood cutters. In 1721, Jeremiah Dummer, a well-educated and privileged Boston politician, trumpeted the “Industry of the people of New England” in managing to reduce the cost of logwood from “30 and 40£ *per* Ton” to “12£ *per* Ton.” Of course, Dummer failed to acknowledge that this great “success” was accomplished on the backs of exploited, wage laboring seamen and logwood cutters. By the end of Queen Anne’s War, the logwood trade no longer represented a place of opportunity where common men, if they had desired, “might have gotten an Estate.” The consequences of these changes essentially fulfilled Lord Carlisle’s plan in the late 1670s to privatize the Bay of Campeche logwood trade. The profits derived from the trade fueled Boston’s war efforts, ship outfitting and building industries, a middle class of waterfront tradesmen, and, most importantly, a growing merchant-elite focused on lavish lifestyles similar to London merchants.⁴²

The economic impact of losing the logwood trade rippled through Boston’s local economy; shipbuilding faltered, debt litigation soared, and bankruptcies multiplied among ship captains and waterfront laborers.⁴³ Thus, in a roundabout way, the Baymen exacted a measure of

⁴¹ *Diary of Cotton Mather*, vol. 1: 1681–1709; vol. 2: 1709–24, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), 2: 446–448 and 455.

⁴² Jeremiah Dummer, *A Defence of the New England Charters* (London: W. Wilkins, 1721), 11; Dampier, *Voyages*, 2: 157.

⁴³ For examples of increased litigation among of waterfront laborers in 1717, see, Joshua Marriner, shopkeeper v. Kettle (shipwright), Fadre (mariner), Mutchmore (sailmaker), Robertson (shipwright), Gill (shipwright), Hodgden (shipwright), Sherman (blacksmith), Young (mariner), and Vail (baker), SCCCPRB, 1715–1721 (July 1717), MSA;

revenge on Boston's merchants when their piratical actions in 1715 prompted the Spanish to attack the Bay of Campeche and seize Boston's vessels in late 1716. The Baymen had stubbornly refused to conform to the new socio-economic conditions created by Boston merchants and ship captains. As described in Chapter 4, they instead joined with the many other outraged maritime laborers around the Atlantic in their battle against poor working conditions, low wages, and limited opportunity for those at the bottom.⁴⁴

The end of the Bay of Campeche logwood trade disrupted Boston's economy and began the port's downward spiral. This is not to say Boston did not maintain its dominance over competing North American port cities. For decades to come, Boston merchants continued to hold an advantage in the English manufactured goods, naval stores, fish, wine, and shipbuilding trades. It retained a roughly three to one advantage in vessel clearances and entrances in comparison to other North American ports until the late 1740s. Still, the port and its inhabitants suffered greatly with the loss of the logwood trade. Already heavily indebted to London merchants in 1717, Boston merchants further mortgaged the port's future through debt to stay afloat from 1717 to 1725. When the logwood trade revived in the Bay of Honduras during the mid-1720s, Boston merchants eagerly reentered the trade but they no longer held their position of power. More importantly, Boston merchants failed to transplant their methods for keeping labor costs low in the Bay of Campeche, paving the way for new political, social, and economic relationships between local baymen and European and North American merchants and seafarers.

For more on Boston's economic decline in 1717, see, James A. Henretta, "Economic Development and Social Structure in Colonial Boston," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 22 (1) (January, 1965): 75-92; Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1979), 79-88.

⁴⁴ See chap. 3 on the connection between logwood cutters and pirates.

Boston's decline after 1717 became a major concern for all of New England. Rampant lawsuits overwhelmed Boston's "middling sort" and generated new laws that stifled local credit arrangements. Meanwhile, depreciating paper currency, issued during wartime to fund government debt, plagued all of New England and many wanted a return to gold and silver. In early 1720, Boston merchant John Colman published *The Distressed State of the Town of Boston*, setting off a firestorm of conflicting visions for New England's future economy. Hidden amidst the fiery debates was a quiet acknowledgement from Boston merchants that the loss of their "cash crop," logwood, had initiated much of the economic pains felt by Bostonians and New Englanders. As Oliver Noyes argued in defense of his fellow Boston merchants, "The Gentleman tells us, That the Silver and Gold will always be Bought up and Shipp'd off while we have such plenty of Bills [paper currency]. As if the plenty of Bills were the cause thereof, no my Friend, it is the scarcity of Returns is the cause. He does not consider we have lost our Bay Trade [logwood trade], which was a great Article in our Returns." For merchants like Noyes, logwood represented the greatest single commodity New England could directly exchange with England for manufactured goods.⁴⁵

On May 24, 1720, the Reverend Edward Wigglesworth challenged Noyes assessment in his *A Vindication of the Remarks of one in the Country*: "Our author thinks the Scarcity of Returns to be Real, and tells me I don't consider we have lost our Bay Trade. I confess I did not consider it, for I knew we had had several vessels from the Bay this Year already; and One of them was in Harbour but Last Week." Wigglesworth correctly identified the schooner *Mary and Abigail* commanded by George Burchan, which arrived in Boston from the Bay of Honduras on

⁴⁵ John Colman, *The Distressed State of the Town of Boston* (Boston: Kneeland, 1720); For quote see, Oliver Noyes, *A Letter from a Gentleman, Containing some Remarks upon the Several Answers Given unto Mr. Colman...* (Boston: Kneeland, 1720), 7.

April 25, 1720. Boston merchants, however, had just begun to test the waters in the Bay of Honduras. According to customs records, Burchan's vessel was the only vessel to arrive with logwood in 1720 and the first since 1718, which supported Noyes's argument that their logwood trade had, for all intents and purposes, been lost. Wigglesworth naively forged ahead: "But I consider'd that the Bay Trade was no such mighty Article as he pretends. The Spaniards have always in time of Peace, as well as War, given us all the Disturbance they could in it." During the course of these debates, Wigglesworth shed important light on how Boston merchants manipulated economic circumstances to their advantage by paying waterfront laborers in commodities but he had very little understanding of Boston's place in the Atlantic economy.⁴⁶

Merchants like Noyes, and even educated residents like the Reverend Cotton Mather, knew the devastating impact of losing the Bay of Campeche logwood trade. The numbers support their appraisal. In 1714 alone, Boston vessels carried home 1,434 tons of logwood, which would have then been re-exported to England. This logwood had a market value in London of roughly £18,642 - £22,944 or an estimated range of 37% - 45% of exports from all of New England to England that year. As previously mentioned, many other Boston vessels, typically larger ships of 200 to 400 tons, sailed directly from the Bay of Campeche with their cargoes of logwood to London. Additional ships smuggled logwood to Amsterdam, Hamburg, Lisbon, and Leghorn, the proceeds of which were generally remitted to London merchants. My previous calculations suggest that Bostonians harvested or shipped an estimated 2920 tons of logwood in 1714. That same year New England imported £121,288 worth of goods from England. Their harvest of logwood would have therefore paid for 31% to 39% of these imports. Such large remittances gave Boston merchants the necessary confidence to invest at home in

⁴⁶ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Vindication of the Remarks of one in the Country* (Boston, 1720), 9-10; "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter* 25 April 1720; see also, appendix, graph 2.

capital intensive shipbuilding and expand their growing network of debtors in North America by re-exporting English commodities. The loss of the logwood trade and that confidence brought an abrupt end to Boston's prosperity, leading Colman to lament to his friend in the countryside, "Truly Sir, This which was within these Ten years, one of the most Flourishing Towns in *America*, in the Opinion of all Strangers who came among us, will in less than half so many more years be the most *miserable Town therein*."⁴⁷

Boston merchants began to reestablish a presence in the logwood trade during the mid-1720s by shifting their attention to the dangerous Bay of Honduras. Spaniards, pirates, and local natives constituted significant threats to Boston vessels and men. The lawless nature of the Bay of Honduras also emboldened common seamen from Boston to mutiny and turn pirate when treated poorly, as was the case with the Bostonian Ned Low. Pirates in the Bay of Honduras destroyed or captured at least seven Boston vessels during the Golden Age of Piracy. Nevertheless, Boston's entrances from the Bay of Honduras steadily grew from six vessels in 1722 to an incredible forty-four vessels after Atlantic piracy had diminished in 1727.⁴⁸

Boston's logwood trade in the Bay of Honduras differed from the Bay of Campeche trade in a number of important ways. The most significant change was Boston merchants' decision to begin using smaller and faster brigs, sloops, and schooners rather than large ships. Another noteworthy development arose when merchants from Amsterdam and London began to exert

⁴⁷ For 1714 imports of logwood, see "Imports of foreign and enumerated commodities imported into Boston in New England," September 17, 1717, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), no. 85i. The price of logwood in London 1703 was at the "exceedingly low" price of £13 per ton, John Ive to John Usher, November 11, 1703, Jeffries Family Papers, box 2, MHS. Meanwhile, in 1717 the price was £16 per ton, see Wilson, "The Logwood Trade," 13. I have used these prices to develop the most likely range for the price of logwood in 1714. New England exports to England amounted to £51,541 in 1714, Sir Charles Whitworth, *State of the Trade of Great Britain in its Imports and Exports, Progressively from the Year 1697* (London, 1776), 63; Colman, *The Distressed State of the Town of Boston*, 1.

⁴⁸ See appendix, table 5; For more on pirates in the Bay of Honduras see, chap. 3 above and Daniel Finamore, "A Mariner's Utopia: Pirates and Logwood in the Bay of Honduras," in Russell K. Skowronek and Charles R. Ewen, *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2006): 64-78.

more influence over the logwood trade during the 1730s and 40s. Similarities, however, remained. Boston continued to employ a variety of methods to obtain logwood, including purchasing from local merchants and baymen and using their sailors as logwood cutters. Even though Boston merchants employed smaller vessels with smaller crews, sailors continued to resist the trade. And finally, the Spanish threat remained a constant and pervasive. All these factors influenced the nature of the logwood trade and Boston's place in that trade.

Boston merchants learned from their losses at the hands of the Spanish in the Bay of Campeche to minimize risk through downsizing the vessels in their logwood fleets from ships to brigs, sloops, and schooners. Pirates further hammered home this critical lesson during Boston's first forays into the Bay of Honduras after 1717. For example, Blackbeard captured and burned the massive 400 ton *Protestant Caesar* in 1718, George Lowther and Ned Low the 200 ton *Greyhound* in 1722, and one of Low's protégés, Captain Richard Shipton, hijacked the Boston-owned *John and Mary* in 1724. The loss of a sloop damaged a merchant's economic condition but the loss of a ship had the potential to ruin careers. Sloops and schooners also had the added benefit of speed and a shallower draught, which helped Bostonians evade the Spanish Guarda Costas. For example, in 1732, Bostonian John Dutch's sloop successfully fled from a large Spanish galley with 190 men, as the Spaniards found "they could not come up with him" and "left the Chase." But when the Guarda Costas predictably managed to capture Boston vessels, ransoming a sloop cost far less than a ship.⁴⁹

If timed correctly, the use of fast sloops and schooners vessels enabled ship captains and their smaller crews to make two voyages per year between Boston and the Bay of Honduras. John Erving's large 80-100 ton sloop *Sarah* managed to accomplish this feat in both 1742 and

⁴⁹ *Weekly Rehearsal* 16 April 16 1733.

1743. Regulars in the logwood trade, such as Captains Joshua Underwood, Ebenezer Kent, William Makken, and John Dutch, also succeeded in entering Boston twice per year with their cargoes of wood. Merchants either sold the logwood in Boston to pay local debts or re-exported it to London or Amsterdam. Some Boston merchants, intent on breaking the English Navigation Laws, continued to ship logwood directly from the Bay of Honduras to European ports outside of England. The overall pattern, however, had shifted to direct voyages between Boston and the Bay of Honduras.⁵⁰

European merchants provided critical advice to Boston merchants seeking to make inroads into the logwood trade but they charged for their aid. Boston merchants had acquired two generations worth of knowledge in the Bay of Campeche logwood trade but the Bay of Honduras was relatively new territory. New York and Newport merchants and ship captains had equal or more experience. London, Amsterdam, and Leghorn merchant houses, such as William and John Hodshon, Thomas and Adrian Hope, and Aikman, Marshall & co., competed for Boston's share of the logwood trade by offering information and incentives.

John Hodshon, for instance, received a cargo of logwood from Boston merchant Jacob Wendell, a newcomer into the logwood trade, in March 1744. The logwood was of poor quality because it was not chipped properly. As a favor to Wendell, Hodshon employed a chipper in Amsterdam to redo the job and thus increase the value of Wendell's logwood. He then lobbied Wendell to "keep an eye" on Boston merchants involved in the logwood trade. He wanted to know the vessels, masters, and tonnage of all "vessels from your place to the Bay" and "whether they are to return to Boston or bound to another part." If the vessel returned to Boston, he wanted

⁵⁰ Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, Harvard Business School (hereafter cited as HBS).

Wendell to check “what sort of wood they bring, unchipt or Bay Chipt wood.” In addition to these requests, Hodshon had other questions: if the wood arrived unchipped, was it chipped in Boston? How much wood did Boston merchants place in storage? Where was Boston’s logwood reshipped? Hodshon wanted the same information, if possible, on the activities of Rhode Island and New York merchants. He was “pretty well assured” that Wendell would “reap a good benefit” by agreeing to this mutually beneficial arrangement of shared knowledge and benefits. Hodshon adamantly desired Wendell to “get all these intelligences without the knowledge of others and that such may be a secret between us.”⁵¹

Hodshon appealed to Wendell three times to keep the contents of his letter secret. He undoubtedly worried that his relationship with other Boston logwood merchants, like John Erving, would be hurt by his employment of Wendell as something of a spy. Some inexperienced Boston logwood merchants, such as William Blair Townsend, found their European partners equally knowledgeable but not so willing to help if they received subpar wood. Thomas Hancock, meanwhile, sought to use the competitive nature of the logwood trade to his advantage, writing to his merchant partner Adrian Hope, “I have been advised by a good friend to consign this cargo [of logwood] to a certain house in Amsterdam, but my principle is not to exchange houses while I have justice and good treatment, which I depend upon from you.” Hancock insinuated that their business dealings were at an end if he believed Hope cheated him.⁵²

The changing conditions of the European market diminished the usefulness of employing sailors as logwood cutters. As Hodshon’s letter to Wendell indicated, Europeans demanded

⁵¹ John Hodshon to Jacob Wendell, March 31, 1744, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, New England Historical Genealogical Society (hereafter cited as NEHGS).

⁵² John Hodshon to Jacob Wendell, March 31, 1744, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS; William Blair Townsend to Captain Waffe Rand, October 10, 1748, William Blair Townsend Letter-book, Baker Library, HBS. Thomas Hancock to Thomas and Adrian Hope, April 12, 1742, box 1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS.

“choice” or “very clean chipt” logwood. Hancock made sure to note to Adrian Hope that his logwood was “Choice Good New River Chipt wood & I Expect will yield me a Better price then commonly wood is Sold at.”⁵³ When laboring in the logwood groves and lagoons of the Bay of Honduras, most Boston sailors simply did not have the time or expertise to produce such logwood. Rather, most Boston merchants ordered their ship captains to buy highly sought after chipped logwood from local factors.⁵⁴ As one English writer noted, however, the practice of using sailors to cut wood continued in the Bay of Honduras and into the 1730s: “our People ... go on Shore to cut logwood: that is to say, land upon the Spaniard’s Country, cut down their Wood, kill their Cattle, and come freighted with the logwood.” John Erving likely employed his sailors as logwood cutters, as his logwood arrived unchipped in Boston. His daybook also indicates that he did not have long-term financial arrangements with local Baymen, which differed from his West Indies and European trades. His cargoes of food, clothing for harsh environments, and tools, all of which seemingly had no buyer, also suggest that his sailors cut the logwood. When Erving’s uncut logwood arrived in Boston, he hired waterfront laborers and a few select sailors to chip his logwood before sending it to Europe.⁵⁵

The increased use of African slave labor in the logwood trade also diminished the need for employing sailors as logwood cutters. Slaves, both Indian and African, had been used sparingly in the Bay of Campeche. John Myles’ crew of roughly thirty men had only a handful of slaves, including “Indian Joseph and Mr. Phillips’ negro.” African slavery, however, eventually

⁵³ John Hodshon to Jacob Wendell, March 31, 1744, R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS; Thomas Hancock to Thomas and Adrian Hope, April 12, 1742, box 1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS; William Blair Townsend to Aikman, Marshall, & Company, January 15, 1749, William Blair Townsend Letter-book, Baker Library, HBS.

⁵⁴ Thomas Hancock to Captain Simon Gross, September 11, 1741 and December 14, 1741, box 1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS; William Blair Townsend to Captain Waffe Rand, October 10, 1748, William Blair Townsend Letter-book, Baker Library, HBS.

⁵⁵ *British Journal* 27 June 1730; Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, HBS.

became the predominant form of labor in the Bay of Honduras logwood and mahogany trades. According to one estimate, slaves accounted for 71% of the population in 1745. More reliable figures put the number of slaves at 2,177 or 75% of the population in 1790. Most of the slaves arrived via the West Indies and with few direct imports from Africa. For example, in 1741, Thomas Hancock directed his ship captain, Simon Gross, to procure a cargo of “eight or ten Good Negro Slaves” from Jamaica or St. Eustatius and sail for the Bay of Honduras. He believed the slaves would do well with the logwood cutters, estimating they would fetch between “sixteen to Twenty tons [of logwood] per head” as was “the Custom at the Bay.”⁵⁶

Belize, like the North American colonies, acquired Africans that regularly fought against their enslavement. According to O. Nigel Bolland, slaves working in the logwood trade “were distributed in small groups, with little supervision but great knowledge of the terrain.” This gave the slaves ample opportunity to escape. Some fled into the woods to form maroon communities but many more sought asylum with the Spanish. Although outside the purview of this study, slave resistance took a more violent turn in the 1760s with the arrival of veterans from the Jamaican slave revolt of 1760-1. At least three violent uprisings took place between 1765 and 1773. According to historian Jennifer Anderson, however, Belize saw far fewer slave revolts than the Caribbean Islands, in part, because slaves had greater agency “through information brokering, mastery over their environment, and taking advantage of personal political, and military upheavals in the Bay.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Deposition of John Jones, March 18, 1701, Mass. Arch., 62: 367; For slave population figures see, O. Nigel Bolland, *Colonialism and Resistance in Belize: Essays in Historical Sociology* (Barbados: University of West Indies Press, 2003), table 1: Slave Population of Belize, 1745-1832, 54; Thomas Hancock to Captain Simon Gross, September 11, 1741, box 1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS.

⁵⁷ This paragraph draws on Bolland, *Colonialism and Resistance in Belize*, 22-30, quote at 24 and Jennifer Anderson, *Mahogany* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 168-183, quote at 182.

Despite the modifications to Boston's logwood trade when it shifted from the Bay of Campeche to the Bay of Honduras, sailor resistance and frontier violence remained a constant. In many cases, trouble typically began when sailors learned that their voyage had changed in the West Indies to include the Bay of Honduras. In September of 1741, Thomas Hancock ordered the captain of his brig *Charming Lydia*, Simon Gross, to sail to the Bay of Honduras. Gross' sailors immediately protested, most likely because they were not receiving Bay of Honduras wages. In subsequent letters, Hancock apologized to Gross, "am very sorry you have meet with so much Trouble with your men," and he advised him to "keep good Orders on board & Good Terms with your men, which is very necessary in Voyages of this Nature." Once in the Bay, however, more violent dangers lurked. For instance, in its April 12, 1739 issue, the *Boston News-letter* reported that "We have Advice from the Bay, That a Sailor belonging to a Vessel of this Town was shot thro' the Head by one of the Men there after a Dispute about some Logwood, which he was carrying off. And also, That a Master of a Vessel belonging to this Place had shot one of the Bay-Men upon some Provocation." Later that year, sailors mutinied on board the *King George*, one of the few Boston ships remaining in the Bay of Honduras trade. The captain, Andrew Woodbury, "beat with uncommon severity" Francis de Quitteville, even though the sailor took no part in the mutiny. The greatest threat Boston and New England vessels and seamen encountered in their illicit trade, however, came from the prowling Spanish Guarda Costas.⁵⁸

Sailors had good reason to ask for higher wages or desert Bay of Honduras voyages during the 1730s and early 40s. American and English newspapers regularly recounted tales of

⁵⁸ Thomas Hancock to Captain Simon Gross, September 11, 1741, December 14, 1741, and April 12, 1742, box 1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS; *Boston News-letter* 12 April 1739; Francis de Quitteville v. Andrew Woodbury, April 11, 1740, Massachusetts Vice-Admiralty Court Record Book.

Boston vessels seized by the Spanish and the long imprisonment or death of the port's mariners.⁵⁹ If Boston ship captains participated in more than one voyage to the Bay of Honduras they were almost certain to be captured at some point. The Spanish seized the abusive ship captain Andrew Woodbury at least two times. The second time he was taken, Woodbury, "rose upon them [the Spaniards] and killed several." Joshua Underwood, another regular in the Bay of Honduras trade, spent at least thirteen months in a Spanish prison.⁶⁰

In a concentrated campaign from 1729 to 1731, paradoxically right after signing a treaty with England to end the Anglo-Spanish War (1727-1729), the Spanish hounded the English out of the Bay of Honduras. They seized the majority of vessels gathering logwood during that span and, in 1731, destroyed the logwood cutters' settlements near the Old River and New River. According to one Spanish report, "in the Space of two Years, it is computed, he [the Governor of Campeche] has taken about 140 Vessels of one sort or other, burnt upwards of 300,000 Quintals of Logwood, ready cut and piled upon the Shore, and made a great many of the English and their Negroes prisoners." By the end of this campaign only "eight or nine" Baymen remained and they were seeking aid from the Spanish to depart. News of the Bay settlements' destruction arrived in Boston in 1732, which subsequently led to only three vessels from the Bay entering Boston in 1733. This was lowest number of entrances in thirteen years. The English repopulated the

⁵⁹ As one ship captain reported in 1730, "when he was in the Bay, in February last; the Spaniards had taken Seven sail of Vessels, most of them New England and Rhode Island Men," *American Weekly Mercury* 18 June 1730. For other English and American reports on Boston vessels seized and crew deaths and imprisonment see, *Daily Post* 28 March 1728; *Daily Journal* 8 May 1729; *London Journal* 11 October 1729; *Grub Street Journal* 13 May 1731; *Boston News-letter* 11 October 1731; *Weekly Rehearsal* 16 April 1733; *New York Weekly Journal* 24 February 1734; *Boston News-letter* 10 October 1734; *Weekly Rehearsal* 3 February 1735; *Boston Gazette* 15 December 1735; *Boston Evening Post* 8 March 1736; *American Weekly Mercury* 2 June 1737; *Boston Gazette* 6 June 1737; *Boston Evening Post* 12 September 1737; *Pennsylvania Gazette* 21 February 1737; *Boston Evening Post* 20 March 1738; *Boston Evening Post* 12 March 1739; *Boston News-letter* 17 May 1739; *New York Weekly Journal* 5 May 1740; *Boston Evening Post* 28 December 1741; *American Weekly Mercury* 29 April 1742; *American Weekly Mercury* 16 March 1743; *Boston News-letter* 26 April 1744; *American Weekly Mercury* 3 May 1744; *Boston Evening Post* 25 June 1744.

⁶⁰ For Woodbury see, *Boston Evening Post* 8 March 1736; For Underwood see, *Weekly Rehearsal* 3 February 1735.

settlements, however, within two years and Boston's entrances from the Bay quickly returned to the typical average.⁶¹

In 1737, the Spanish once again mounted a major assault on the vessels in the Bay, seizing at least twenty-eight. Boston's logwood fleet suffered major losses; however, one man's loss is another man's gain. Re-export merchants like James Bowdoin saw great opportunity in the destruction of the logwood trade and the subsequent death and imprisonment of many New England seafarers. In the comfort of his home, Bowdoin confidently wrote to his partners in London that "Logwood will come to a good market by reason the Spaniards have taken so many Vessels in the bay this summer" and "the Price [of logwood] will Raise when they here [hear] the bay Is Taken." In the Bay, meanwhile, a number of Boston sloops had escaped the Spanish onslaught "by going up the River." The men built a fortification to defend against recurrent Spanish attacks but, like the rest of the Baymen, suffered greatly from disease and lack of provisions. The combination of Spanish attacks, starvation, and disease caused an "abundance of Bay Men" and "those belonging to the vessels" to die. The *Boston Evening Post*, however, proudly noted that some Boston vessels, free of Spanish harassment, continued to scour the Bay for that precious commodity – logwood.⁶²

It is fitting that logwood had a dark red heartwood that could produce dyes the color of blood. For much of the eighteenth-century, Boston merchants willingly sacrificed young, impoverished seafaring men at the altar of profit to supply Europeans with colorful textiles and

⁶¹ "Extract of a Letter from Campeche in the Province of Yucatan, Nov. 24, 1731," *Boston News-letter* 5 October 1732; For reporting on the 1731 destruction of the logwood trade in England see, *Read's Weekly Journal* 27 May 1732 and *The Political State of Great Britain*, 44, (London, 1732); "eight or nine": *Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal* 22 July 1732.

⁶² *Boston Gazette* 6 June 1737; James Bowdoin to Storke and Gainsborough, September 21, 1737 and October 21, 1737, Storke and Gainsborough Papers, vol. 6, New York State Library Manuscripts and Special Collections; *Boston Evening Post* 12 September 1737.

elegantly stained furniture. The mid-1720s to 1739, however, when no formal war was declared between the Spanish and English, was the most violent period of the trade. The Bay of Honduras stood beyond the pale of “civilization.” The English operating there did so without the protections of their government and the Spanish intended extermination. They frequently referred to logwood cutters and seafarers participating in the Bay trade “as Thieves and Pirates.” Sometimes, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Spanish were correct in that assumption.⁶³

Violence, torture, rape, and massacres became hallmarks of the Bay of Honduras logwood trade with seafaring men on both sides seeking revenge for recurring atrocities. For example, in 1729 the Spanish seized a Boston-owned vessel and “cut all the sloop’s Company to pieces in cold blood, only the cabin boy escaped.” The informant further noted, “this is not a singular instance, but a late one.”⁶⁴ Shortly thereafter, the London-owned ship *John and Jane*, “having on board some Women for the Logwood Cutters,” fell victim to a Spanish sloop, which “lately belong’d to Boston.” After five hours of fierce resistance, the captain of the *John and Jane* surrendered. The Spanish agreed to give quarter but John Cockburn, a sailor on board the *John and Jane*, recounted that “they immediately boarded us, which they had no sooner done, than, with Sword in Hand, they laid about them on all Sides, cutting and slashing us in a most barbourous Manner.” The Spanish then found a pregnant woman whose husband died in the engagement and “in a most brutal Manner, fell to tearing the Cloaths off her back.” The captain, Pedro Polias, proceeded to rape her violently. Worried about possible retribution, the decision was made to maroon the English “on some desolate Country.” After a fascinating and difficult

⁶³ *A Letter from a Merchant at Amsterdam to his Correspondent in London* (London, 1718), 1.

⁶⁴ Galfridus Gray to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 9, 1730, *CSPC*, vol. 37 (1730), no. 280.

journey in Central America, Cockburn returned to England where he published a firsthand account of the *John and Jane*'s terrible fate in 1735.⁶⁵

Cockburn's story arrived on the market just as the Boston and other English vessels began to earnestly defend themselves and retaliate in kind for depredations suffered at the hands of the Spanish in the Bay of Honduras. In March of 1736 the *Boston Gazette* reported that Captain Willis of Jamaica had seized a Spanish sloop, killing eight of the crew in the attack. Willis had the head of Philip Ackling, "a noted Pilot in the Bay," cut off and "sent the same for a Present to Jamaica." The mutilation of Ackling's body and the symbolic present of his head to Jamaica represented a clear escalation in the Bay of Honduras's ongoing, unofficial conflict. Like the Spanish, the English were now willing to treat their enemies in the Bay of Honduras as pirates and accord them the same disrespect. That escalation, however, was not lost on Willis and Benjamin Eggleston, who had arrived after the battle in a sloop from Boston. The two captains, "fearing the consequence of their staying longer in the Bay" decided to flee the Bay of Honduras rather than face possible Spanish retribution. Eggleston had only loaded nine tons of logwood before fleeing the Bay, surely a disappointment for his investors back in Boston.⁶⁶

New Englanders increasingly realized the need to protect the logwood fleets. Prior to 1735, most New England ship captains meekly allowed the Spanish to seize their vessels. The smaller craft and crews employed by New England ship captains were almost always outgunned and outmanned. Occasionally, heavily armed English and Dutch ships with large crews would come to their aid. In 1734, however, Rhode Island took the initiative and reassessed their strategy. They decided to outfit a large ship, the *Papillion* commanded by Richard Dursey, to

⁶⁵ *London Evening Post* 23-25 September 1731 and 19-21 October 1731; John Cockburn, *A Journey Over Land From the Gulf of Honduras to the Great South-Sea* (London, 1735), 1-10, quotes at 4, 7, and 6.

⁶⁶ *Boston Post-Boy* 8 March 1736; *Boston Evening Post* 8 March 1736; *American Weekly Mercury* 1 April 1736.

convoy and protect the smaller sloops and brigs in their logwood fleet. Dursey had a reputation for bravery. In 1723, he had been captured by pirates in the Bay of Honduras but managed a daring escape. With the pirates hot in pursuit, “Dursey & Company gave them so warm a Reception that they were glad to betake themselves to their Vessel again.” Dursey had similar success against the Spanish. He successfully secured the release of two sloops, including Captain Edmonds of Boston, by defeating a large Spanish Guarda Costas with a crew of 120 men in “a close and warm Engagement.” Happy with the results, in 1735 Rhode Island again sent a fleet to the Bay of Honduras protected by “a fine large Ship,” commanded by the former governor’s son John Cranston. Like Dursey, Cranston successfully defended his fleet by recapturing a Rhode Island sloop that had fallen into Spanish hands.⁶⁷

Boston seems to have had a singular dearth of heroes and brave seafarers. This became a major embarrassment in 1737 when the Spanish once again wrought havoc on Boston’s logwood fleet. News circulated that when the Spanish attacked the logwood fleet only the 400 ton, London-owned *Harle*, Captain Hall of Bristol, and a Jamaican sloop took part in the ensuing engagement. During the battle, the Spanish hoisted the king’s colors to inform the English that if they did not surrender they “should be treated as Pirates when taken.” The *Harle* and company nevertheless fought on “like gallant Englishmen.” The Boston sloops and men lying nearby remained indifferent. The *Boston Evening Post* lamented that fighting “would have been more glorious to themselves, and profitable to their Owners, than their lying idle Spectators, and contenting themselves with a base and neutral Behavior.” Although the paper did not explicitly mention that many of the “idle Spectators” were from Boston-owned sloops, it was common knowledge that the majority of vessels seized after the fight originated from the New England

⁶⁷ Dursey: *Boston Gazette* 11 March 1723 and *New York Weekly Journal* 24 February 1734/5; Cranston: *Weekly Rehearsal* 2 June 1735 and *Boston Gazette* 15 December 1735.

port. The *Evening Post* continued to lambast the honor of the men who did not fight, heartlessly declaring, “’tis hoped they ... who were over careful of their Lives, are either murdered by their barbarous Enemies, or subjected to a Captivity, in many respects worse than Death it self.”⁶⁸

Between 1734 and 1737, accounts from the Bay of Honduras lauded the bravery of Rhode Island, Jamaica, London, and Bristol vessels but Boston, which typically had triple to quadruple the number of vessels in the Bay as Rhode Island, had no valiant actions to speak of. This sense of shame may explain why local newspapers crowed with pride two weeks after the *Harle* report when word arrived that some Boston sloops had fled up river and set up barricades to fight the Spanish.⁶⁹ Evidently, all of Boston’s honor had not been lost.

The negative press had the desired effect on Boston ship captains and sailors. In 1738, they entered the Bay of Honduras ready to fight for logwood. In May, word arrived that a Boston sloop had successfully repelled a Spanish attack. The captain had “encouraged his Men to defend themselves and the Vessel, setting before them the wretched Captivity they would suffer, if taken, and the probability of beating off their enemies, if they behaved as *Englishmen* used *formerly* to do.” The sailors killed many of the men that boarded their sloop and then, as the Spanish fled, “fired their Swivel Guns into their Pettiaugers, and kill’d them abundance of men.” The *Boston Evening Post* extolled this violence for logwood, calling it “a brave and bold Defence” undertaken by “gallant” men. The paper could not resist, however, remarking on the past “base Behaviour of our Countrymen, who have tamely given up their Vessels without firing a Gun, tho’ they were well provided for a Defence.” The *Boston Evening Post* failed to mention that most Boston vessels that easily surrendered were sloops with crews of six to eight men. The

⁶⁸ For the account of the *Harle* and inaction of other English vessels see, *Boston Evening Post* 29 August 1737; Boston had already received word of the vessels seized in the Bay of Archibald Blackador, a Bostonian, who embarrassingly “got clear of ’em [the Spanish], but without a stick of Logwood” see, *Boston Gazette* 6 June 1737.

⁶⁹ *Boston Evening Post* 12 September 17.

Guarda Costas operated like privateers – heavily armed and manned. Their primary purpose in the Bay was to seize and terrorize English vessels involved in the logwood trade. Futile resistance from small crews could only mean death, torture, and long imprisonment in disease-infested prisons generally located in backward towns like Campeche and Merida. Conversely, the Spanish often took vessels that surrendered without a fight to Havana where quick ransoms could be paid and the sailors liberated. For sailors, and even ship captains, engaging the Spanish under those conditions could be suicidal.⁷⁰

Boston merchants must have recognized the poor odds their seafaring men confronted with their small vessels and crews. In 1738, likely in response to the devastating Spanish attacks the previous year, they followed Rhode Island's example by outfitting at least two ships with crews of over forty men. By late summer, the town could proclaim a hero of its own. Like clockwork, the Spanish had arrived in the Bay of Honduras in spring to disrupt and attack English vessels and logwood cutters. They focused their attention on English operations on the New River, seizing two sloops and the flats bringing logwood down the river from the interior. Most of the confiscated wood belonged to a Boston-owned ship commanded by Edward Buckley, which currently rode at anchor at the Old River. Buckley and his men hired a sloop upon hearing of the Spanish attacks and "went directly after the Spaniards, retook the Flats and both the Sloops, and gave liberty to Twenty-five English Sailors whom Mr. Jack Spaniard had taken Prisoners." This chivalrous Bostonian decided to kindly maroon the prisoners he took rather "than to hide them according to the Mosketo Fashion," which we must assume meant skinning them alive. For the next few weeks, Buckley continued to protect the New River

⁷⁰ *Boston Evening Post* 1 May 1738; For Boston logwood trade vessels taken to Havana and the process of ransoming see, *Daily Post* 28 March 1728 and Deposition of Butler Chauncy, July 9, 1730, CSPPC, v. 37 (1737), no. 323.

logwood trade, halting further attempts by the Spanish “to block up the Mouth of the New River.”

Buckley’s incredible saga did not end there. He received a letter from “the famous *Rigidore*, who has ply’d in the Bay, and done so much Damage to the English” that threatened revenge for Buckley’s actions against the Spanish and demanded an answer. Buckley brought this letter to his crew “who all with one Voice cry’d out, *Let us go and give him an Answer by Word of Mouth.*” According the *New England Weekly Journal*, the crew was so eager to fight that squabbles erupted over who would stay and protect the ship. Buckley then armed a sloop and with forty men went to attack the “Famous Don.” They found the Spanish at “a Place where the Rogues usually fitted out their Craft for Mischief” with a vessel hauled on shore, likely for the purpose of careening, and a camp with eight large tents. The encampment was protected by six swivel guns and the Spanish fired upon the approaching vessel. Buckley responded by firing “his Cariage Guns, Swivells, and small arms” to cover his crew’s landing. The crew then charged the camp causing *Rigidore* and his men to flee into the surrounding landscape, leaving behind all their valuable equipment for the crew to pillage.

The tales of Buckley’s daring exploits and the bravery of his men delighted Boston’s press and likely the merchant community. The *Boston Evening Post*, so critical of Boston’s seafaring men the previous year, now remarked “we cannot but look upon it as a pleasing Circumstance in this Affair, that the Head of those brave Men concern’d in it, is a Native of this Town.” The *New England Weekly Journal*, meanwhile, reminded readers of past weakness but heaped Buckley with praise: “If all the English Masters would thus exert themselves, we should not so often hear of Vessels being taken, for it is plain that they [the Spanish] are poultron

[poltroon] cowardly Rascals.”⁷¹ The message from the Boston press was unanimous. Acquiring logwood demanded sacrifice and bloodshed. Buckley not only protected his vessel and precious cargo but brought the fight to the Spanish doorstep. For those acts of courage, he had earned the town’s gratitude and respect. Conversely, Boston newspapers continued to mock and shame the majority of ship captains for meekly submitting to Spanish predations. Happily for Boston’s opinionated newspapers, Buckley’s account found a large audience with reprints published in Philadelphia and London, including the *London Evening Post*, *Daily Gazetteer*, and *The Gentleman’s Magazine*.⁷²

Boston’s unequivocal praise and encouragement of Buckley’s violent actions against the Spanish would have met a certain amount of skepticism in England, where the topic of Spanish aggression in the Americas had long been hotly debated. For some politicians and merchants, the Spanish clearly wronged Britain. These men argued that the English had a right to cut logwood and settle the Bays of Campeche and Honduras under the Treaty of Madrid (1670) between Spain and England, which stipulated that all American territories currently settled by the English belonged to England. In 1670, the English had logwood cutters in both bays but were more firmly established at Trist in the Bay of Campeche. In late 1739, as Parliament justified its recent declaration of war against Spain, William Pulteney stood before his peers and condemned Spain for ordering “our ships concerned in the logwood trade to be seized.” He continued, “we justly contended that we had a right by the same treaty [The Treaty of Madrid (1670)] to that trade.”⁷³

⁷¹ *Boston Evening Post* 28 August 1738 and *New England Weekly Journal* 29 August 1738. The *Boston Gazette* does not appear to have printed an account of Buckley’s exploits but other Boston papers, including the *Boston News-letter* and *Boston Post Boy*, may have printed an account but those issues have been lost.

⁷² *American Weekly Mercury* 7 September 1738; *London Evening Post* 19-21 October 1738; *Daily Gazetteer* 21 October 1738; Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronical*, vol. 8 (London, 1738), 546.

⁷³ For Treaty of Madrid, also called the “American Treaty,” see, Wilson, “The Logwood Trade,” 4-5 and 9, Duke of Newcastle to the Council of Trade and Plantations, January 20, 1733, *CSPC*, v. 40 (1733), no. 20-20.x, and Great

Not everyone agreed with this assessment, believing the grounds for claiming territory on the Spanish American mainland to be flimsy. Some berated “our famous *West-India Logwood Cutters*, who in a piratical Manner, and in Violation of all Treaties, and the common Laws of Nations, enter into another Prince’s Country without any Leave, or paying Custom or Duties, but forcibly bring away what they have a Mind to.” Others defended Spain’s right to use of force against English interlopers in the Bays of Campeche and Honduras, claiming it was “no more than Just.”⁷⁴ An anonymous author in the *British Journal* opposed the logwood trade on moral grounds. This author wrote an intriguing piece on smuggling whereupon he expanded his topic of inquiry “to the Honduras and the Bay of Campeachey, where our People as well from New England and New York, & as from Jamaica, go on Shore to cut Logwood.” He equated the logwood trade to “robbing a House” and outlined the pervasive bloodshed necessary to carry on the trade:

When the Spaniards have come to drive them away [in the Bays of Honduras and Campeche], for the Spaniards are not ignorant of their own Rights, or insensible of the Injury done them, what has been the Consequence? The desperate Thieves (for they can be no better) have resisted, fired upon the Spaniards, and many times beaten them off, and killed a great many of their Men. There occurs a short Question in that Case, pray is this Killing no Murther? Is this a fair War, or is it a downright defending of Robbery, and murdering those that come to take Care of their own Goods?

Again, at other Times the Spaniards have come in with a Force superior, have master’d them, and after an obstinate Resistance, and many kill’d on both Sides, the Thieves have been worsted, most of them kill’d or taken, and the rest fled into the Woods, where ‘tis very likely they would be starv’d, and perish with Hunger.

He then asked of his readers “pray at whose Door must all that Blood be said to lye?”

Britain. Parliament, *A Collection of the Parliamentary Debates in England, from the year M,DC,LXVIII to the present time*, vol. 18 (London, 1739-1742), 436-437.

⁷⁴ *The Danverian History of the Affairs of Europe for the memorable Year 1731* (London, 1732), 35-36; *A Letter from a Merchant at Amsterdam to his Correspondent in London* (London, 1718), 1.

It was a good question. Were the lowly logwood cutters and English and Spanish sailors who actually bled at fault? Did the blood belong to their immediate commanders whether ship captains or Spanish colonial governors? Or, did it belong to the merchants of Boston, Newport, New York, Kingston, London, and Amsterdam who profited most from the trade? Our author believed that the logwood trade tainted “the Consciences of the Persons who not only have carry’d on these Trades, but justify’d others in the doing it, and call it honest.”⁷⁵ He therefore would have certainly condemned the cries for blood from Boston newspapers and elite men who sat in the comfort of their homes berating the courage of seafaring men who failed to bleed for logwood.

* * *

Logwood’s importance to Boston’s rise as an Atlantic port city cannot be understated. Boston’s poor hinterland, large seafaring population, and shipbuilding industry both propelled and enabled the port to become an early leader in the acquisition of logwood. Furthermore, the commodity’s low production costs and high value in Europe made it a perfect commodity for Boston’s indebted merchant-elite. It served as Boston’s “cash crop.” Despite the high revenues logwood generated, Boston merchants were not content to leave the harvesting of logwood to the men who lived in the Bays of Campeche and Honduras. They instead sent fleets of ships to Bays and their own seafarers and dispossessed laborers swarmed the logwood groves to cut wood at set wages. This system further drove down the per ton cost of logwood and increased merchants’ profits. It also essentially privatized a trade that had previously created opportunities for impoverished, laboring men.

The logwood trade, however, was fraught with risk. Merchants suffered great economic losses at the hands of the Spanish and pirates. Many Boston ship captains and sailors spent

⁷⁵ *British Journal* 27 June 1730.

months and years in Spanish prisons. Many more died of disease, injury, and violence, all in the pursuit of a livelihood for themselves and their families. Probably unbeknownst to these seafaring men, their labor, sacrifice, and blood generated the surplus capital necessary for Boston's local shipbuilding industry and thus local economy to thrive.

6.0 BUILDING AND OUTFITTING SHIPS IN COLONIAL BOSTON

Boston's waterfront flourished in the early eighteenth century, a scene of busy shipyards, wharves, warehouses, taverns, and shops of maritime specialists. The port had established its premier position among North American ports by internationalizing and deploying maritime labor, establishing credit relations with English merchants, abandoning support for pirates, and dominating the logwood trade. The port and its large maritime capabilities became the vehicle by which England's imperial ambitions and system of Atlantic commerce were realized in the Americas. Boston's transatlantic merchants took full advantage of their position within the Atlantic economy, acquiring large estates and power within the local community. They also actively invested their capital into the production and maintenance of ships. Boston's citizens reaped the benefits through stable employment in building and outfitting ships, an abundance of English manufactured goods, and increased security from enemies.¹

Shipbuilding was the backbone of Boston's early entry into the wider Atlantic world and source of its employment for scores of local tradesmen. From 1697 to 1714, Bostonians constructed 406 vessels amounting to 28, 230 tons of shipping capacity. Seventy percent (284) of these vessels remained in the hands of Boston merchants, representing an impressive expansion in the city's maritime capabilities from the previous twenty-two years (1674 – 1696) when

¹ This chapter is slightly revised and used with permission from my forthcoming article "Building and Outfitting Ships in Colonial Boston," *Early American Studies* 13.4 (Forthcoming, Fall 2015), 881-907. Copyright © 2015 The McNeil Center for Early American Studies. All rights reserved. Few historians have examined ship outfitting in depth and none have appreciated its significance to Boston's local economy, social structure, and transatlantic networks. Cathy Matson's examination of ship outfitting in eighteenth-century Philadelphia is the most well-developed of these; see Cathy Matson, "On the Dock of the Bay: Outfitting a Voyage in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," paper presented at The McNeil Center for Early American Studies Conference "On the Anvil of Labor History in the Revolutionary Era: Billy G. Smith and Fellow Artisans," November 7 to 9, 2013. For shipbuilding in Boston, see Joseph A. Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America* (Charlottesville; University of Virginia Press, 1976); and Bernard and Lotte Bailyn, *Massachusetts Shipping 1697-1714: A Statistical Study* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1959).

Bostonians produced only thirty vessels totaling 1,685 tons.² Meanwhile, vessel entrances more than doubled over a seven year period, rising from 251 in 1707 to 525 in 1714. Vessel clearances also increased dramatically from 298 in 1707 to 550 in 1714. Over thirty years later in 1745, Philadelphia, Boston's major North American competitor, reported only 310 entrances and 278 clearances.³

The steady construction of sloops, brigs, and especially ships, as well as the rise in vessel entrances and clearances, required a vibrant maritime community to build, repair, provision, and crew the vessels. By the early 1700s, the labor of waterfront tradesmen and the capital intensive ship outfitting and building industries became the foundation of Boston's local economy. Each vessel built or outfitted in the port resulted in the multilateral exchange of bills, cash, commodities, and services, which enticed or obligated most Bostonians to participate in some capacity. Historians have estimated that twenty-five to forty percent of adult males were directly engaged in Boston's maritime economy during the eighteenth century.⁴ These figures do not include the bakers, butchers, brewers, tallow chandlers, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, glaziers, painters, shopkeepers, and a variety of other producers employed in outfitting and building ships. Furthermore, historians have not explored the pervasive practice among merchants to create deep structures of credit and debt in the local community to construct and outfit their vessels.

By the 1730s, a complicated but brilliant system of credit, barter, and book debts allowed the movement of goods and services to flow within Boston even without a stable currency, while

² Bailyn and Bailyn, *Massachusetts Shipping 1697-1714*, Appendix, tables XVII and XIX, 102, 105, 110.

³ "Entrances and Clearances," *Boston News-letter*, January 6, 1707 to December 29, 1707, and 3 January 1714 to 27 December 1714; "Entrances and Clearances," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 January 1745 to 31 December 1745.

⁴ Jacob M. Price, "Economic Function and Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974): 123-86, appendix C, 177-183; Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), appendix, table 1, 387-391.

sterling accumulated in the hands of Boston's transatlantic merchants to pay their ever-increasing debts to their counterparts in London.⁵ The economy of the ship had demanding labor and financial requirements that generated local and transatlantic credit networks tying together Boston merchants, ship captains, and waterfront tradesmen in a way of life that defined the waterfront.

* * *

Boston's participation in the Atlantic economy depended on the ability of merchants, waterfront tradesmen, and seafarers to agree about acceptable arrangements to outfit and crew vessels. Merchants often convened in the coffeehouses or at their homes to discuss possible joint interests and ventures, as few merchants had the capital or appetite for risk to own vessels individually in the early 1700s. Together they decided whether to commission and outfit a new vessel, buy an old hull, or use an available vessel. Each merchant acquired a share or shares of the vessel; their financial contribution to the outfitting and cargo was defined by the number of shares they owned. Partnership agreements enabled merchants to pool the necessary capital to purchase a cargo, outfit a vessel, pay the captain and crew, and insure their risks.⁶

Partnership arrangements also allowed for a division of labor that reflected each partner's connections with the waterfront community. For instance, Thomas Cushing Jr. had few connections to ship outfitters. He therefore paid the majority of his share of the outfitting bill by supplying cargoes of fish, staves, and shingles. Cushing also relied on the bakers, butchers, and brewers who supplied his household to supplement ships' supplies. He rarely hired or had financial arrangements with the professions most closely related to repairing and building ships

⁵ W.T. Baxter, *The House of Hancock: Business in Boston, 1724-1775* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc, 1965), chap. 2.

⁶ Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1962), chap. 5.

such as ship carpenters, ropemakers, sailmakers, or joiners. In contrast, John Erving maintained extensive credit arrangements and personal relationships with waterfront tradesmen and laborers to outfit and repair his vessels yet depended on other merchants to arrange the majority of cargo purchases.⁷

In all cases, however, merchants, ship captains, and waterfront tradesmen had to reach a series of agreements about acceptable quality of goods, extent of credit, timing of labor, and more. Captains and craftsmen expected merchants to pay or credit their bills promptly. Merchant partners likewise desired smooth financial transactions and clean account balancing. And although ship outfitting often created conflict due to shoddy work or late payments, future business required quick, informal resolutions that rarely invoked litigation. All parties knew that public court cases would hurt their reputations and potentially decrease future business and employment.⁸ The collapse of one merchant empire in the early eighteenth century, made public by a highly visible court appearance, underscored just this. In 1703, William Clarke hauled Boston's most powerful ship-owning merchant, Samuel Lillie, into court for failing to pay and properly account for his 7/16th share in the outfitting and cargo of the ship *Neptune* bound for Terceira, Portugal. In his efforts to force payment from Lillie, Clarke challenged Lillie's gentleman status in biting words: "It is Like your Cheating Tricks, for you are a Cheating Knave, and I will Justifie and prove it." Boston's courts favored Clarke, and its merchant community agreed Lillie was a "Knave."⁹ For the next five years, Clarke and his fellow merchants punished Lillie in the courts over financial issues stemming from ship outfitting, sales, and trade. Lillie

⁷ Account Book of Thomas Cushing, Jr., 1739-1742, Baker Library, Harvard Business School (hereafter cited as HBS); Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, HBS; Appendix, table 6.

⁸ Cathy Matson has also found that litigation over outfitting disputes was rare, Matson, "On the Dock of the Bay," 3.

⁹ William Clarke v. Samuel Lillie (1703), Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas Record Books, 1701-1706 (hereafter cited as SCCCPRB), Massachusetts State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA); Depositions of Jeremiah Condry and Samuel Lillie, Suffolk County Supreme Judicial Court Files (hereafter cited as SCSJCF), MSA, case nos. 5705 and 5714.

began liquidating his vast fleet of forty-two solely-owned vessels to pay his local creditors. In 1708, discredited and insolvent, Lillie fled Boston for London to avoid debtors' prison. Merchants considered ship outfitting serious business and had little tolerance for men like Lillie who disrupted customary practice.¹⁰

Boston's aspiring merchants not only needed trustworthy partners; they also relied on the maritime expertise of ship captains, whom merchants hoped to procure from a pool of local men with good families and reputations. As Boston merchant Thomas Fayerweather wrote to a potential partner, "I have a Master . . . [who] is a Boston man and one I well know who you may be assured of from me to be a Person that will Answer our End."¹¹ Merchants hoped local connections would keep ship captains honest and reliable. Some merchants took an active role in meeting with waterfront tradesmen and obtaining a cargo, visiting individual establishments to arrange for supplies and services. Others, such as John Erving, required waterfront tradesmen to meet at his counting house to conduct business.¹² Meanwhile, any of the large merchant houses that owned or invested in multiple vessels, had little time to micromanage ship outfitting. Instead, they delegated the responsibility to skilled ship captains who knew how to manage seafarers, direct the work of laborers, and provide specifications for skilled tradesmen such as shipwrights, ropemakers, and joiners.

¹⁰ Nathaniel Pickman v. Samuel Lillie (1704), Samuel Keeling and Charles Chauncey v. Samuel Lillie (1705), and Beamsley Perkins v. Samuel Lillie (1706), all in SCCCPRB, 1701-1706, MSA; and Andrew Faneuil v. Samuel Lillie (1707), John Wheelwright v. Samuel Lillie (1707), Jeremiah Allen v. Samuel Lillie (1707), and Edward Bromfield and Co. v. Samuel Lillie, 1707-1708, all in SCCCPRB, 1706-1715, MSA. The multiple lawsuits of Edward Bromfield and Co. finally drove Lillie to flee Boston.

¹¹ Thomas Fayerweather to Mr. Richards, July 27, 1749, Thomas Fayerweather Letterbook, 1749, Thomas Fayerweather Papers (Mss. 80), R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, New England Historic Genealogical Society (hereafter cited as NEHGS).

¹² Erving frequently noted when tradesmen came to his house to settle accounts, see Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, HBS.

Owners of ships and cargo often granted ship captains a great deal of autonomy in preparing the vessel for a voyage and accompanying it to distant places. The ship captain met with most waterfront tradesmen to discuss the ship's needs for repairs, modifications, provisions, and stores, but ship specialists such as shipwrights, ropemakers, riggers, sailmakers, blockmakers, and joiners received the majority of his attention. Merchants often permitted ship captains to draw bills on them to pay for the work of tradesmen. These transactions generated endless minor disputes between merchants and tradesmen when ship captains did not negotiate an agreeable price for goods and services. The ship captain had a separate bill of disbursements to pay for wages and food for day laborers, entertaining potential crewmembers, traveling to nearby ports to enlist men, and providing small necessities such as compass repairs or tar and pitch for graving. One Boston ship captain frequently referred to the waterfront tradesmen he hired to outfit his employers' vessel as "my tradesmen." This particular ship captain managed almost every aspect of preparing the ship while his merchant employers hunted for a cargo to haul to the West Indies.¹³

In addition to conducting business with tradesmen to outfit the vessel, the captain scoured the waterfront to hire seamen. This task took time and patience. One Boston ship captain spent every day, except Sundays, for three weeks "in Quest of Sailors," referring to the undertaking as a "sport." To his frustration, some sailors promised to sign on one day, and "failed" the next. The

¹³ Ships' Papers, Jeffries Family Papers, boxes 17 and 18, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter cited as MHS). For a day-by-day account of a Boston ship captain's experience in outfitting a ship, see, Anonymous Sailor's Diary, 1733-1735 (S-800), MHS. I recently discovered that the identity of this anonymous ship captain was Moses Prince, which is revealed in the papers of his employers Peter and Andrew Oliver at the New York State Library. For particular letters concerning the voyages outlined in Prince's diary, see, Peter Oliver to Storke and Gainsborough, March 23, 1734 and October 27, 1735, Storke and Gainsborough Papers, vol. 6, New York State Library Manuscripts and Special Collections. For a specific example of ship captain disbursements, see Captain Thomas Porter's Bill of Disbursements for *Content*, Jeffries Family Papers, box 17, MHS. Historian Ralph Davis makes similar claims regarding ship captains in service of London-based merchants, in Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, 159-160.

ship captain generally had absolute control when hiring a crew but occasionally merchants intervened, requiring the captain to hire a relative or friend, typically at the rank of mate. These nepotistic arrangements had the potential to undermine the captain's authority and rarely benefitted the voyage.¹⁴ Ship captains also had to be concerned about the honesty of their merchant employers to reimburse captains for their outlays of capital for supplies and wages for the crew.

For much of the seventeenth century Boston merchants generally paid waterfront tradesmen immediately with cash – much of it silver flowing into Boston from smuggling or piracy – or with goods.¹⁵ This financial arrangement limited the number of vessels that could be built, the labor tradesmen could provide, and the ability to import English commodities. However, it also sustained a fairly equal relationship between tradesmen and merchants. The introduction of English credit and complicated account balancing during King William's War changed how Boston merchants financed the shipbuilding industry. As English credit flowed into the community, Boston merchants in turn began creating long-term credit arrangements with waterfront tradesmen and other skilled laborers. At its simplest level, tradesmen received credits from merchants for their labor and debits for the purchase of goods or drawing notes on a merchant to pay others for goods and services. But in colonial Boston, as W.T. Baxter explained, financial arrangements often transferred labor, goods, and, to a lesser extent, cash among three, four, and possibly more different parties. The complicated nature of these multi-person transactions tied one individual's assets and liabilities to many others. The lack of cash in the system required that when accounts were settled between parties it often meant transferring one

¹⁴ Anonymous Sailor's Diary, 1733-1735 (S-800), MHS; For example of nepotism gone awry, see Pyam Blowers to Thomas Fayerweather, April 27, 1763, box 9, Thomas Fayerweather Papers (Mss. 80), R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS.

¹⁵ Account book of Robert Sedgwick and Ebenezer Learned, 1647-1650, 1666-1677 (Mss C 4958). R Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS.

person's debt to another. Local labor and exchanges of goods could be sustained across scores of people linked with myriad small amounts of credit and debt without cash. But the ship outfitting and building industries generated the labor and capital necessary for merchants to create far larger and more intricate financial networks that solidified their position of power both within the local and Atlantic economy.¹⁶

The waterfront network and accounts of David Jeffries represent an early manifestation of this new labor economy based on ship outfitting and building. From 1706 to 1715, Jeffries maintained an extensive waterfront network of at least 137 tradesmen and laborers. He employed nine butchers, eight joiners, eight smiths, six bakers, and five ship carpenters (excluding shipwrights). Jeffries favored a few tradesmen such as Thomas Lee, blockmaker, Alexander Sherrar, cooper, and John Greenough, ship carpenter, hiring them 75%, 65%, and 61% of the time, respectively, to outfit twenty-eight voyages. He had no hesitation, however, about hiring new tradesmen or strangers. Boston's staggering economic and population growth during the early eighteenth century ensured the steady arrival of new shipbuilding artisans from England. Merchants happily employed these productive members of the town, generally paying them in one-half or two-thirds goods. Long-term, flexible credit arrangements helped make this system viable.¹⁷

¹⁶ Baxter, *The House of Hancock*, chap. 2. Baxter's analysis of Boston's local economy is enlightening, but he failed to recognize the central role of waterfront tradesmen and the substantial capital requirements of a ship. Thomas Hancock's daybook, Baxter's main source for his argument, reflects an economic system whereby waterfront tradesmen's labor moved commodities and increased the merchant's overseas credit. During the months of May and June 1738, 56% of Hancock's daybook entries involved waterfront tradesmen or ship captains. That number jumps to 73% if we add merchants who were part of his ship outfitting and building network. These entries included debits, credits, and transfers of mostly goods or debts for labor provided on Hancock's and his merchant partners' vessels, see Hancock Family Papers, 1664-1854, volume TH-1 Daybook, 1737-1739, Baker Library, HBS.

¹⁷ Jeffries Family Papers, boxes 14-20, MHS; For percentages see, appendix, table 6; For population and economic growth see, Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 143n1 and chap. 6; For influx of foreign tradesmen

A quick glance at Jeffries' account with sailmaker, Adino Bulfinch, demonstrates the complex nature of paying for labor when little cash was available. From 1704-1713, Bulfinch provided sails and repairs for twenty-four vessels, for which he charged Jeffries £236. In return, Jeffries drew ten times on seven of his debtors to pay Bulfinch £115 in cash or goods for the sailmaker's services. In particular, Jeffries called upon Jonathan Waldo, who owed him a little over £148 in 1714, three times to pay Bulfinch. Bulfinch also received from Jeffries duck, drugetts, and needles for making and repairing sails, as well as salt, butter, cheese, flour and wine for his household amounting to £121. Over fifty percent of Bulfinch's labor for Jeffries was paid for with imported goods at their markup prices. Jeffries thereby reduced the true costs of Bulfinch's labor through his privileged position as an importer. Bulfinch may have wanted this relationship, as he could potentially resell or export the goods at even higher prices. Bulfinch, however, miscalculated, purchasing more goods from Jeffries than his future labor covered. By 1710, Bulfinch's consumption and spending outpaced his labor for Jeffries and he became part of Jeffries' network of debtors. For the next three years, Bulfinch worked on Jeffries' vessels to balance their accounts. When the two men finally settled accounts in 1713, Bulfinch still owed Jeffries more than £13. Prior to falling into debt, Bulfinch's labor had allowed Jeffries to shuffle debts off his books, move imported goods, and avoid paying cash in Boston for services rendered. The product of his and other waterfront tradesmen's labor, the ship, could be sold in London for sterling or credit to purchase goods for the return voyage, thereby maintaining

during the early eighteenth-century see, Barry Levy, *Town-born: The Political Economy of New England from its Founding to the Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 181.

Jeffries' important credit connections abroad. Once Bulfinch fell into debt, Jeffries commanded the former's labor, all of which further contributed to Jeffries' rising merchant success.¹⁸

Bulfinch's debtor status mirrored many other members of Jeffries' waterfront network. John Ellis, ship chandler, owed Jeffries £306 in December 1714 for imported iron goods, cordage, and ship supplies. Benjamin Gerrish, a gunsmith who cleaned and repaired guns on Jeffries' vessels, owed a little over £8 in October 1714 for imported iron, old weapons, and paying other creditors. By early 1714, Nathaniel Oliver, who supplied Jeffries' vessels with bread and beer, had incurred a debt of £664 to Jeffries. This debt had been outstanding so long that the account only reveals Oliver's attempts to repay it. When Jeffries and Oliver settled accounts in April 1717, Oliver had made a significant dent in his debt, primarily through providing bread and beer for Jeffries' vessels, but he still owed £276.¹⁹ By the same token merchants gained greater control over the local economy because their access to London-based credit allowed them to manage debts creatively at home and leverage local relationships to create credits. As one Boston merchant explained to a London contact, "I am the most uneasy man on earth to be in Debt, especially at Home." Debt at home indicated weakness, which hurt a merchant's local reputation and therefore ability to act as financial authority in the community. Debt at home that could not be balanced through goods or outstanding debts on others meant the merchant was no better than a waterfront tradesman.²⁰

¹⁸ "David Jeffries and Co. account current with Adino Bulfinch, 1713" Jeffries Family Papers, box 18, MHS; "John & David Jeffries Account with Jonathan Waldo" Jeffries Family Papers, box 20, MHS.

¹⁹ Many of Jeffries' most important accounts with waterfront tradesmen are missing or he paid in cash; of the ten waterfront occupations analyzed in appendix, table 6, only John Greenough, a ship carpenter, had a positive balance with Jeffries when they settled accounts in December 1716. The positive balance was £3:5:1, easily settled by Jeffries, see "David and John Jeffries accounts with John Greenough (1716), John Ellis (1714), Nathaniel Oliver (1717), and Benjamin Gerrish (1714)," Jeffries Family Papers, box 20, MHS.

²⁰ William Blair Townsend to Storke and Champion, May 1749, William Blair Townsend Letter-book, Baker Library, HBS.

With the end of Queen Anne's War in 1713, Boston and London merchants decreased their orders for new vessels and it became increasingly difficult for waterfront tradesmen to balance their accounts. Then, to make matters worse, Boston merchants learned of the demise of their Bay of Campeche logwood trade in 1717.²¹ The end of this important remittance trade sent Boston's economy into a downward spiral. Ship orders dwindled. Confidence in long-term credit arrangements plummeted, triggering unprecedented lawsuits. As Gary Nash and others have noted, the multitude of lawsuits from 1717 to 1723 further divided the haves and have-nots more deeply, as goods and cash traveled up the social ladder. Jails in and around Boston became overwhelmed with debtors. In early 1718 the government passed "An Act for the Ease of Prisoners for Debt" to create more room in jail to separate debtors from hardened criminals. Shipwrights, ropemakers, joiners, riggers, and many others lost employment. In desperation, some, such as future pirate Ned Low, turned to the sea to support their families but even there employment proved difficult to find and exceedingly dangerous due to the rising tide of Atlantic piracy.²²

Boston's economic catastrophe in 1717 led to the creation of new currency and credit laws that directly impacted how merchants and tradesmen in the ship outfitting and building industries conducted business. Many in the Massachusetts Bay colony blamed Boston's difficulties on access to easy credit, over-consumption, and depreciating currency but few

²¹ For decrease in Boston's shipbuilding after Queen Anne's War, see Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America*, 42-43; For Spanish attack on the Bay of Campeche see, *Boston News-letter* April 1, 1717 and April 8, 1717.

²² Boston shopkeeper Joshua Marriner brought nine waterfront tradesmen to court over debts in 1717 alone; see the cases of Joshua Marriner, shopkeeper v. Kettle (shipwright), Fadre (mariner), Mutchmore (sailmaker), Robertson (shipwright), Gill (shipwright), Hodgden (shipwright), Sherman (blacksmith), Young (mariner), and Vail (baker), all in SCCCPRB, 1715-1721, MSA; James A. Henretta, "Economic Development and Social Structure in Colonial Boston," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 22 (January, 1965): 75-92; Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 79-88; "An Act for the Ease of Prisoners for Debt," (October 1718) in *Acts and Laws of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England* (hereafter cited as *Acts and Laws*) (Boston: Green, 1718), 312-313; For Ned Low's experience on the Boston waterfront and loss of employment, see George Francis Dow and John Henry Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast* (1923: reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1996), chap. 10.

outside the merchant-class recognized the crucial external trade factors. The enacted solutions therefore focused entirely on local economic practices that generally favored the mercantile community.

In early February 1718, the Massachusetts Bay government passed a law calling in province bills issued during Queen Anne's war to pay for military expenses. These bills had quickly depreciated as merchants used them to purchase silver and gold at rates far higher than the face value of the bills. Merchants then exported the silver and gold to England to pay debts and import more commodities. Boston merchants worried that the end of paper money in Boston would lead to a predominantly barter-based economy. John Colman, a prominent Boston merchant, recognized that barter grounded in the labor of tradesmen building and outfitting ships had already allowed Boston to subsist by consuming and transferring food, goods, and services. In 1720, he noted "That which hath kept this Town alive the last Year is the Number of Ships which have been Built in it, which Employs great part of the Town. I wish those who Build them may find their Accompts [accounts] therein & be Encouraged to go on, it will be a great Mercy to us, & very much help us." Colman continued, "but that alone will not do; There must be something to Pass from Man to Man by way of Exchange; it is a Vanity to talk that such a Town as this can subsist without Money, or some other Medium of Exchange." He also greatly sympathized with waterfront tradesmen who had to accept one-half or two-thirds goods for their services.²³

²³ "An Act for Calling in of Province Bills of Credit" (February 6, 1718), *Acts and Laws*, (Boston, 1718), 298; John Colman, *The Distressed State of the Town of Boston* (Boston: Kneeland, 1720), 5.

Some outside the merchant community found Colman's argument hypocritical. The Reverend Edward Wigglesworth challenged merchants like Colman to "tell the world the plain Truth:"

That these poor People are paid in Goods for their Labour not for want of Province Bills, but because Factors saving their Province Bills to buy up Silver and Gold, as fast as it comes in, that they may ship it home to their Principals and so procure more Goods to pay Labourers and Tradesmen with: Let them tell the world, that it is by this mean that Honest, Industrious People in Boston are brought to such Extremities, as to sell their Pewter and Brass to buy Food.

As Wigglesworth argued, this system, exemplified in the example of Jeffries and Bulfinch above, benefitted merchants far more than tradesmen. The reverend, however, failed to mention that tradesmen's complicity allowed this system to develop because it increased their consumption levels and therefore standard of living. And in all fairness to the merchants, Bostonians expected them to procure necessary and desired goods.²⁴

Shortly after the recall of the province bills, the government passed "An Act for the Regulation and Limiting Credit in Trade," which was necessary because "the long Credit in Trade of late Years given by Merchants, Shop-keepers, and Others, has by Sad experiences been found to occasion in a great measure the extravagance & excessive Consumption of unnecessary Commodities." This law limited the extension of credit to just two years, drastically changing business as usual in Boston. If creditors failed to bring their debtors to court "after the Expiration of Two Years" then "no Action" could be taken against the debtor. The law specifically referenced the pervasive practice of book debts, which previously had undefined timeframes and allowed merchants and tradesmen flexibility in repayment. However, this same practice was responsible for the numerous and damaging lawsuits after the collapse of the logwood trade and

²⁴ Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter from one in the Country to his Friend in Boston, Containing some Remarks upon a late Pamphlet, Entitled, The Distressed State of the Town of Boston* (Boston: J. Franklin, 1720), 17.

Boston's subsequent economic woes. Although only in effect for five years before permanently changing the terms of credit to three years in 1723, this law had profound implications for the relationship between merchants and waterfront tradesmen. Colman and other merchants who had scores of indebted tradesmen found this law to be ill-suited to their needs "For, it obliges some who are naturally inclined to be favourable to their Neighbours, to be severer than else they would be; and others who are of a more cruel disposition, are glad of such an opportunity to Oppress them by turning their Book-Debts into Bonds, and Exacting Interest." The law forced many merchants to make the hard decision to either forfeit repayment of their loans or sue the men working to build and outfit their vessels, potentially losing productive labor by sending tradesmen to jail.²⁵

Like politicians and economic pundits today, Colman and his compatriots recognized the importance of maintaining perceived notions of prosperity among the "middling sort," even if debt was the primary vehicle propelling the system. They fought to limit economic solutions that hindered consumption and led to unemployment, such as moving to a limited supply of silver as the primary medium of exchange and decreasing the amount of time allowed for the repayment of debts. Most importantly, Boston's elite transatlantic merchants knew the value of having good waterfront tradesmen to build and outfit their own vessels, for their own reputation in a competitive arena of Atlantic commerce relied on waterfront craftsmen's ability to repair, provision, and crew the growing fleet of vessels in a timely fashion. It therefore did not take long for merchants and tradesmen to form new arrangements after the dust settled on the law limiting credit. Merchants tightened their extension of credit to only trustworthy and known tradesmen

²⁵"An Act for the Regulation and Limiting Credit in Trade," (May 28, 1718) *Acts and Laws*, (Boston, 1718), 306; "An Act for the Relief of Creditors," (May 9, 1723) *Acts and Laws* (Boston, 1723), 381; Colman, *Distressed State*, 2.

who could repay debts within two years. Meanwhile, waterfront tradesmen with good family reputations and assets linked their fortunes and future to transatlantic merchants like Colman who were generally willing to forgive debts rather than sue workers.²⁶

These laws forced merchants to create smaller, more exclusive credit networks with waterfront tradesmen. These new arrangements decreased financial risk for both merchants and tradesmen. They also benefitted wealthier tradesmen by limiting competition from the foreigners and less affluent Bostonians that had hitherto found opportunities during Boston's boom period between 1700 and 1717.²⁷ Table 6 in the appendix illustrates this trend. This table was created by compiling data from voyage "outset accounts" for each individual merchant. These accounts tell us who the merchant employed to outfit their vessel, their occupation, and how much they were paid. To simplify matters, table 6 only traces the ten most important professions employed in building and outfitting vessels and merchant partners. The table includes the names and employment percentages of only the top two tradesmen in each category, but adds in the "Network Size" – how many others in that profession were employed at various times by the merchants. The "Entire Network" includes all tradesmen and merchants employed by each merchant, even those not included among the calculated ten professions. The differences between David Jeffries network (1706 to 1715) prior to the law limiting credit and those afterwards are striking. As previously noted, Jeffries had a large ship outfitting and building network of 154 tradesmen and merchants. Of the ten professions measured in table 6, Jeffries

²⁶ Colman, *Distressed State*, 1, 2-4, 8; Colman was a victim of the law limiting credit and it appears he decided to lose money rather than sue, see Oliver Noyes, *A Letter from a Gentleman, Containing some Remarks upon the Several Answers Given unto Mr. Colman...* (Boston: Kneeland, 1720), 6-7.

²⁷ Barry Levy draws similar conclusions regarding the exclusive nature of Boston's labor force. Levy argues that waterfront tradesmen relied on the political-economy of the "town" to ensure high wages and protection from foreign competition; his generally positive view of a protective community in the early eighteenth century does not account for episodes of crisis in the Atlantic economy or variations in merchant-tradesmen relations; see Levy, *Town-born*, 2-4, 44-45, 189, and 198-205.

employed fifty-two different tradesmen to outfit twenty-eight voyages, and his ten primary tradesmen worked on his vessels only 48% of the time. From 1740 to 1745, John Erving employed only twenty-five tradesmen, and his ten primary tradesmen worked 66% of the time for forty voyages, a 40% overall increase over Jeffries. Despite Erving's twelve additional voyages, he employed twenty-seven fewer tradesmen in the occupations measured than Jeffries, a testament to the increasing exclusivity of merchant-tradesmen relations after the law limiting credit. Similarly, from 1737 to 1739 Thomas Hancock's ten primary tradesmen worked 71.4% of the time to outfit seven voyages. Tradesmen lucky enough to enter into these patronage networks found a measure of job security and indeed, depending on the merchant, attained a level of comfortable incomes. Even though Boston's logwood trade recovered during the late 1720s and early 1730s, Boston's laws and overall economy no longer offered the opportunities that had permitted David Jeffries to hire and maintain credit relationships with many different waterfront tradesmen from various family and economic backgrounds. By Hancock and Erving's generation, individuals who lacked creditworthiness and good family reputations or connections had a difficult time establishing themselves in Boston's tough labor market.²⁸

Boston's economic decline during the 1720s also impacted merchant wealth. With credit tightening, employment dropping, and consumption decreasing, merchants were left with full warehouses and a bad market. This led some enterprising merchants to compete with waterfront tradesmen to supply vessels with provisions and naval stores. Wealthier merchants, who typically included ship-owners, may have believed that other merchants were more creditworthy

²⁸ Percentages and data derived from appendix, table 6; David Jeffries frequently employed new tradesmen, mixing and matching companies to build and outfit his vessels, see *Ships' Papers*, Jeffries Family Papers, boxes 17 and 18, MHS. Conversely, Hancock and Erving consistently hired the same people to work their vessels. Their account books attest to having a team of preferred tradesmen but when they had multiple vessels outfitting or building in port they had to hire a second team, see Hancock Family Papers, 1664-1854, volume TH-1 Daybook, 1737-1739 and *Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745*, Baker Library, HBS.

that tradesmen. As table 6 indicates, after the 1720s merchants took on a greater role in building and outfitting ships for their fellow merchants. Partner merchants comprised only 11% of David Jeffries' waterfront network during the early 1700s. They also typically did not supply provisions or naval stores for Jeffries' vessels; rather they sold old hulls and rented their wharves to him. In contrast, merchants comprised 22% of Thomas Hancock's network, 28% of Thomas Cushing's network, 38% of John Erving's network, and 33% of Henry Bromfield's network. The merchants in these later networks supplied cordage, duck for sails, anchors, nails, cables, beef, pork, ship's bread, rum, and a variety of other necessities for vessels' stores and repairs – items that had hitherto been supplied by tradesmen.²⁹

Sometimes merchants traded in the interstices between importers and local tradesmen, as when John Fayerweather built a merchant empire in the 1730s and 1740s by selling yarn and hemp purchased from Boston's transatlantic merchants to local ropemakers, who paid Fayerweather with cordage. Fayerweather maintained financial arrangements with fifteen different ropemakers. He dispersed their cordage and rigging throughout the community, which included well-diggers, and sailmakers who accepted it in payment for their services. He also accepted cordage in payment for sugar, rum, and other commodities. Indeed, cordage, much like rum and sugar, became a viable currency in Boston but only because it had a local outlet in the ship outfitting and building industries. Hancock, Cushing, Erving, and Bromfield all relied on Fayerweather to provide cordage for their vessels at least once. Increased competition from John Erving in the 1740s, however, forced Fayerweather and his son Thomas to find new markets

²⁹ For merchants decreasing wealth during the period 1716 to 1736, see Nash, *Urban Crucible*, appendix, table 5, 397; For percentages divide the total merchants "Network Size" by the "Entire Network," see appendix, table 6.

outside of Boston and they began exporting their cordage to the growing shipbuilding ports of Philadelphia and New York.³⁰

Daniel HENCHMAN's role in outfitting John Erving's vessels provides a different example of merchants' function in ship outfitting and building. HENCHMAN was a prominent Boston bookseller. Outfitting ships and paying waterfront tradesmen allowed him to balance debts, as well as move goods he received in payment for his books and paper. From Erving's daybook we can gather a great deal of information about the financial relationship between HENCHMAN and Erving. We know Erving imported paper and books for HENCHMAN from London and Amsterdam. When the two settled accounts in April 1743, HENCHMAN owed Erving a sizable £2560 Massachusetts currency debt. Over the course of four years, HENCHMAN paid the equivalent of £563 Massachusetts currency with pork, beef, cordage, and black oakum for outfitting Erving's vessels. HENCHMAN also on occasion paid Erving's waterfront tradesmen and ship captains in corn, cheese, pork, and wheat to settle his debts.³¹

The predictable consequence of merchants' increased reliance on each other for outfitting old vessels was the decreased earnings for tradesmen, who suffered an eleven percent decrease over this period. This practice likely also led to decreased job opportunities for tradesmen. Compounding this problem, by the 1730s and 1740s many Boston merchants outsourced their shipbuilding to neighboring ports to take advantage of cheaper labor costs.³² John Erving, despite

³⁰ During the 1730s, Isaac Gridley and Abijah Adams supplied Fayerweather with most of his cordage. Thomas Hawding became Fayerweather's primary supplier in the 1740s but by then John Erving undermined his monopoly on the cordage industry. Account Books, 1729-1733, 1733-1736, and 1744-1747, John Fayerweather Papers (Mss 79), R Stanton Avery Special Collections, NEHGS.

³¹ In February 1743, Erving credited HENCHMAN's account £251 Massachusetts currency for providing provisions to Erving's smith, cooper, mastmaker, blockmaker, and a ship captain; see *Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745*, Baker Library, HBS.

³² From 1706-1715, tradesmen earned 62% or £3608 out of £5811 for outfitting old vessels, sample size: 21. From 1737-1745, tradesmen only earned 51% or £9889 out of £19,295 for outfitting old vessels, sample size: 44. From 1706-1715, tradesmen earned 67% or £7985 out of £11,903 for building and outfitting new vessels, sample size: 7.

the heavy involvement of other Boston merchants in outfitting his vessels, resisted the trend of outsourcing local shipbuilding. From 1742 to 1745, he ordered seven ships built on his own account and one sloop for a West Indies partner, pumping an extraordinary £61,003 Massachusetts currency into the local economy. Erving, who had been a ship captain in the Boston-Amsterdam-London trade during the early 1730s, centered his entire Atlantic-based merchant empire on Boston's local ship outfitting and building industries. Every year, Erving's sloop *Sarah* made two voyages to the Bay of Honduras to acquire good quality, chipped logwood and carry it back to Boston. Meanwhile, the brig *Yucatan* and snow *Thistle* made direct voyages to Amsterdam, carrying Erving's logwood, as well as freighting the logwood of other Boston merchants. The snow and brig returned from Amsterdam carrying yarn for the town's ropemakers, duck for the sailmakers, and paper for Daniel Henchman so he could repay Erving in naval stores and provisions for his vessels. Finally, Erving employed the ship *John Galley* in the London trade. He sent naval stores, mostly tar, to London and the ship returned with hemp for ropemakers, coal for the smiths, and sail cloth, nails, and other necessities for his vessels. The *John Galley* also freighted a great quantity of goods for other Boston merchants, which partly explains Erving's large network of merchant debtors.³³

Erving managed to undercut Fayerweather's monopoly among ropemakers and sailmakers by directly importing yarn, hemp, and duck for them at lower costs and on his own

From 1737-1745, tradesmen earned 67% or £62,423 out of £93,856 for building and outfitting new vessels, sample size: 12. Merchant involvement in providing supplies for new vessels still seems much greater during the 1730s and 1740s but perhaps the cost of tradesmen's labor had increased, nullifying the greater involvement of the merchants. This issue could use further examination. Data compiled from "outset accounts" in Ships' Papers, Jeffries Family Papers, Boxes 15-20, MHS; Volume TH-1, Daybook, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS; Account Book of Thomas Cushing, Jr., 1739-1742, Baker Library, HBS; Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, HBS. For outsourcing of shipbuilding, see Levy, *Town-born*, chap. 6.

³³ Erving kept a meticulous daybook with copies of invoices, sales of goods, full accounts with tradesmen, and, most importantly, separate outset and cargo accounts for voyages. Erving also solely owned all of his vessels with the exception of the schooner *Whalebone*, which he sold in 1742. See Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, HBS; see also, John Erving Logbooks, 1727-1730 (P-89, 1 reel), MHS.

vessels. Furthermore, he provided an outlet for their substantial debts to him by constructing his ships locally.³⁴ Erving then attempted to sell his new ships in London, usually at a loss, in order to balance his debts there. For instance, in March 1743 he happily sold his new ship *Apollo* in London for £1233 sterling. This same ship had cost about a third more than this to build and outfit just a few months earlier but Erving probably felt he had accomplished a great coup because much of the ship had been paid for with the outstanding debts of others at home. Once again we see merchants maintaining debt in London and adding debtors at home. Erving's overall contributions to Boston's local economy and waterfront tradesmen cannot be denied, especially when compared to his peers seeking investments elsewhere. His experience as a ship captain allowed him to envision an Atlantic economic system centered on providing indispensable services for local waterfront tradesmen and merchants. He understood that the ship and waterfront labor generated wealth for the merchant community. Erving's efforts did not go unrewarded. In 1748, he was Boston's highest taxed citizen, quite an achievement for a man who had still been a ship captain in 1730.³⁵

Some Boston merchants further secured their place in Atlantic commerce by collaborating on the repairs of foreign-owned and Royal Navy vessels docked in Boston temporarily. These opportunities allowed waterfront tradesmen to clear outstanding debts with their merchant employers with their earnings from outsiders. Tradesmen could have worked directly with foreign and Royal Navy ship captains to outfit their vessels if cash and not credit relationships had been the primary means of payment for outfitting and building vessels. By the

³⁴ Ropemaker Hugh McDaniels owed Erving £7230:4:3 in March 1743 but in August 1745 he provided £2510 worth of cordage for Erving's new ship, *Warren Frigate*, Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, HBS.

³⁵ During his long tenure as a merchant, Erving sued just one of his waterfront tradesmen, John Erving v. Jonathan Brown (1754), SCSJCF, MSA, case no. 73583; For Erving's tax status, see, Baxter, *The House of Hancock*, 107n54.

1730s, however, merchant credit arrangements controlled the Atlantic commercial system, increasing the dependency of waterfront tradesmen and laborers on the goodwill of their merchant employers, who might recommend trusted local workers to strangers docked in the city. For Boston merchants, building or outfitting foreign vessels represented a high reward and high risk venture. In the reward column, they earned commissions, established credit in London or paid foreign debts, moved commodities locally at the expense of foreigners, and provided employment for their network of waterfront laborers. Simultaneously, they risked non-payment from their foreign merchant partners, prolonged attempts to receive payment, legal battles, shortages of exports or gluts of imports related to shipbuilding, and alienating foreign partners. The more they consolidated shipbuilding into their own hands as a commercial elite, the greater their chances for either profit or loss in equal measure.

Thomas Hancock's emergence as one of Boston's foremost merchants can only be understood if we examine his efforts to build vessels on behalf of his network of foreign merchants. In 1738, Hancock employed his network of waterfront tradesmen to build two ships and one brig on behalf of London partners Katherine Forman and Henry Lang. Hancock's business received a direct infusion of £300 sterling in commissions. He also oversaw the disbursement of £29,449 Massachusetts currency worth of goods, notes, debt repayments, and cash to compensate local waterfront tradesmen and merchants.³⁶ For instance, Hancock's primary blockmaker, Benjamin Snelling, used his credits with Hancock to purchase corn, rye, and flour. Ebenezer Bridge, Hancock's primary smith, likewise used his credits to purchase food and rum but also directed Hancock to pay his outstanding debts, partly in goods and partly in

³⁶ The total cost for the three vessels amounted to £5890 sterling but Forman and Lang sent £1851 sterling worth of cordage, duck, and other supplies in order to reduce costs. Hancock therefore only handled payouts totaling £3739 sterling.

cash, to Boston merchants David Mason and John Webster. Hancock's business consequently became a commercial hub facilitating the financial and commodity transactions of nearly a hundred different waterfront tradesmen and prominent Boston merchants. In so doing, Hancock increased his local reputation and credit worthiness. For their part, Forman and Lang essentially capitalized Thomas Hancock's local and transatlantic business, allowing him to build his own vessels and expand beyond his faltering Newfoundland trade into more profitable ventures in the West Indies sugar and rum and Bay of Honduras logwood trades.³⁷

Fortune did not always materialize easily for Boston merchants engaged in outfitting and building vessels for foreign merchants. For example, in 1737, Boston merchant Peter Faneuil agreed to complete the financing for the construction and outfitting of two ships for the affluent French merchant houses of the Pascaud brothers, Griffon, and De Le Croix. Faneuil, despite warnings from his uncle, Andrew Faneuil, did so at the behest of the French ship captain, James Grenou, who assured Faneuil that his bills "would be honourably Discharged." Faneuil pounced on the opportunity to marshal his network of waterfront tradesmen and move goods at the expense of foreigners. The considerable expenses associated with the new ships, however, required him to borrow money from his merchant friends in Boston. He therefore worried it would be a "Vast discredit to me and hurt to my Reputation" if the French merchants did not promptly honor the £5644:6:9 worth of bills drawn on them.³⁸ To Faneuil's dismay, the French merchants denied the bills outright, spurring protest charges from the London merchants Faneuil had hoped to pay. The French merchants explained in their correspondence that Faneuil had

³⁷ For tradesmen purchases see, Entries for April to December 1738, Daybook, volume TH-1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS; For Hancock's expanding trade see Letterbook, 1735-1740, volume TH-4 and box 1, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS.

³⁸ Peter Faneuil to Thomas, Thomas, and Son, November 15, 1737, Peter Faneuil to Monsieur's Pascauds Freres dela Rochella, May 22, 1738, and Peter Faneuil to Benjamin Faneuil, January 21, 1739, volume F-4, Faneuil Letterbook, 1737-1739, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS.

acted without consulting them, and, perhaps rightly, believed Faneuil wished to fleece them. Faneuil's swift drawing of bills in sterling and remittance of them to London suggests a gambit to pay creditors in London through outfitting foreign vessels in Boston.³⁹ Nevertheless, the Boston merchant complained bitterly about the French merchants' "unhandsome Usage" of him, and declared to Captain Grenou that had he known, he "would have let both the Ships have rotted by the walls before I would have Advanced my money to fit them to the Seas." Faneuil immediately sent his brother, Benjamin Faneuil, to France with plans to seize the two French ships and pursue legal action against the French merchants. By the time Benjamin Faneuil arrived in France in July 1738, however, the Pascaud brothers had sent goods worth £1567:5:9 to pay down their debt rather than drain their accounts of specie. The bitter dispute between the Faneuil brothers and the French merchants continued into 1739 when Faneuil's letterbook ends abruptly without a conclusion to the affair.⁴⁰

The larger context of French Atlantic relations with Boston's traders played an important role in Faneuil's trouble. The Faneuil family had powerful Boston, London, and West Indies connections but French merchants saw Boston as marginal to their extensive Atlantic networks. They could afford to offend Faneuil and potentially lose Boston as a market. But in other cases, Bostonians had the upper hand. Henry Bromfield apparently disregarded the request of West

³⁹ Faneuil attempted a similar ploy with the London merchant house of Lane and Smethurst when he quickly contracted a ship on their behalf with only a vague remark from them. As Faneuil later commented, "ship for Captain Buckley is now almost ready to raise and will be putt up in two or three days at farthest, everything being ready in the Yard for that purpose, I had contracted for her before I received your contrary order and so shall carry her on in whatever manner you may be interested as you see proper." In this scenario, Faneuil's debtor status to Lane and Smethurst required him to tactfully suffer the losses from his spoiled attempt to repay debts in London through building and outfitting a ship locally, see, Peter Faneuil to Lane and Smethurst, October 31, 1738 and Peter Faneuil to Lane and Smethurst, January 10, 1738, Faneuil Letterbook, 1737-1739, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS.

⁴⁰ Faneuil also hoped to damage the French merchants' reputations, noting to Captain Grenou, "This letter you may shew to whom you please for I think such ungenerous acts as those should be made Publick to the world." Peter Faneuil to Captain James Grenou, April 6, 1738, Peter Faneuil to Captain James Grenou, May 22, 1738, Peter Faneuil to Benjamin Faneuil, October 30, 1738, and Benjamin Faneuil, January 21, 1739, volume F-4, Faneuil Letterbook, 1737-1739, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS.

Indies merchant, Gedney Clarke, to draw only £100 sterling on his London account with Whitaker and Hannington for the outfitting and cargo of the schooner *Escape*. Bromfield racked up expenses doubling that amount, noting to Clarke, “I have now inclosed you invoice of her Cargo and account of cost and outsett, by which you'll see the amount is Considerable more than you expected, she wanted a great many things more than you Imagined and was much tore in pieces coming on the Coast.” Bromfield demanded prompt payment from Clarke and he requested London sterling rather than a drawn-out exchange of services and goods typical of a mutually beneficial commercial relationship.⁴¹

Clarke sought to decrease his unanticipated debt to Bromfield by disputing charges and commissions. Bromfield instructed the West Indies merchant on appropriate business practices, noting that he only did “what is done by everybody.” Clarke traded considerably with Boston and New England merchants. He could therefore ill afford to hurt his reputation by contesting Bromfield’s accounts. Bromfield, meanwhile, dealt primarily with Boston and London merchants, opting to re-export West Indies commodities and import English manufactured goods. He also operated a cannon foundry in Boston. He had few direct interests in the West Indies. Clarke’s desperate situation represented a profitable opportunity with limited negative consequences. Like Faneuil, Bromfield schemed to use the labor of local ship outfitters and the resources of foreign merchants to pay debts or establish credit in London. Ultimately, the West Indies merchant was compelled to honor Bromfield’s request to draw a further £100 sterling on

⁴¹ Henry Bromfield to Gedney Clarke, December 13, 1743 and January 8 1744, and Henry Bromfield to Whitaker and Hannington, December 22, 1743, Henry Bromfield Letterbook, 1742-1743, Letterbooks, account books, and cash books of Henry Bromfield (Mss 664). R Stanton Avery Special Collections Department, NEHGS.

Whitaker and Hannington in London. Embittered and disillusioned, Clarke subsequently cut his business ties with Bromfield.⁴²

Building and outfitting vessels for foreign merchants enabled Boston merchants to turn local labor into fluid capital overseas. Merchants acquired sterling balances in London even as they paid their waterfront tradesmen primarily in food and goods. Through their Atlantic connections, Boston merchants became the conduit by which food, commodities, and cash flowed. In the process, they acquired control of both labor and commodities. Waterfront tradesmen, desperate for stable employment and financial security through credit arrangements, validated merchants' central position in the economy. For much of the early to mid-eighteenth century, Boston merchants likewise recognized the importance of waterfront tradesmen both as economic assets and consumers. They happily and eagerly sought opportunities to employ their network of waterfront tradesmen to outfit or build foreign vessels. The perception among Boston merchants of slim profits during the 1730s, or, as one Boston merchant put it, "there is nothing but Cutting and Shuffling in our trade," led to a reconsideration of relying on local labor as an investment and major source of capital.⁴³

In 1744, war with France opened the British government's coffers and merchants on both sides of the Atlantic saw opportunities for quick and easy monetary gain. Many of Boston's merchants were especially hopeful of breaking free of local patronage networks – labor for goods, goods for labor – in order to acquire sterling payments and wider Atlantic trading. Unlike

⁴² Bromfield directed Whitaker and Hannington to pay his creditors in London, Lane and Caswall and Joseph Lee, with the sterling granted him by Clarke, see, Henry Bromfield to Whitaker and Hannington, December 22, 1743 and Henry Bromfield to Gedney Clarke, March 14, 1744, Henry Bromfield Letterbooks, 1742-1743 and 1744-1749, Letterbooks, account books, and cash books of Henry Bromfield (Mss 664). R Stanton Avery Special Collections Department, NEHGS. This March 14, 1744 letter was Bromfield's last correspondence with Clarke.

⁴³ Peter Faneuil to Benjamin Faneuil, September 7, 1738, volume F-4, Faneuil Letterbook, 1737-1739, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, HBS. For the war profiteering of English merchants see, David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (United States: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chap. 7.

John Erving, these men on the make failed to realize the central importance of keeping shipbuilding and outfitting in Boston. Instead, when England declared war on France many of Boston's prominent merchants immediately moved their capital out of shipping, including Thomas Hancock, Henry Bromfield,⁴⁴ and Charles Apthorp, and into military supplying. They gleefully sold their vessels as quickly as possible and began buying local provisions and stores to supply a military expedition against Louisbourg. Once Louisbourg was captured in 1745, Boston merchants supplied the British regulars and navy stationed there. In return, they received bills of exchange in sterling, invaluable for dry goods importing. Those who had abandoned the local economy reaped the benefits in the short-term. In 1748, Henry Bromfield assessed the results of merchants abandoning waterfront tradesmen with a calculating eye, "We expect the Shipwrights and other Tradesmen on Ships must fall in their prices as at present there are but few of them Employed and no orders for any; Vessels have already been sold here at 20 and 30 percent loss, and indeed the price of vessels here was so high, that persons find it impossible to support them." The incredible amount of personal wealth he, Hancock, Apthorp, and many other Boston merchants had amassed from war profiteering was not being reinvested into the local industries that had so long generated their own wealth, power, and status, and the employment of a great many artisans and laborers. When capital went elsewhere, underemployed tradesmen had no choice but to raise their charges to merchants.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ According to Bromfield's daybook, he invested in only one vessel (1/4 share), the schooner *Enterprise*, and two voyages during the war, one in 1746 and another in 1747. Both voyages went to Gibraltar, undoubtedly to supply British troops and ships (the cargo consisted of tar, pitch, swivel guns, bullets, flour, and rice. Like Hancock, he freighted his other goods for the military in Cape Breton and Nova Scotia on coasting vessels; see Henry Bromfield Daybook, Volume 17, Letterbooks, account books, and cash books of Henry Bromfield (Mss 664), Avery Special Collections, NEHGS.

⁴⁵ Henry Bromfield to Thomas Goldthwait, November 30, 1748, Henry Bromfield Letterbook, 1744-1749, Letterbooks, account books, and cash books of Henry Bromfield (Mss 664), Avery Special Collections, NEHGS. For Hancock and Apthorp's withdrawal from shipping and investment in war profiteering, see Baxter, *House of Hancock*, chap. 7. For a general overview of war profiteering during the colonial period, see Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1997), chap. 1.

For over fifty years, the ship outfitting and building industries had provided Boston with a local economic system to support its wider Atlantic ambitions. During the late 1690s and early 1700s, the labor of waterfront tradesmen was a great vehicle for consumption, which in turn allowed Boston merchants to form crucial credit arrangements in London through importation earlier than other North American ports. This arrangement worked effectively until both Boston and London merchants stopped ordering new vessels during the peace after 1713. Work for waterfront tradesmen dried up and they could no longer balance their accounts. By 1717, it became apparent that debt had funded a great deal of consumption for tradesmen, ship captains, and merchants. Luckily for Boston merchants their outstanding debts resided in London, and when the lawsuits and insolvencies in Boston began, they stood above the fray and gathered in the debts owed to them.

From the ashes of the old system, merchants and tradesmen had to negotiate a new arrangement. During the 1720s and 1730s, merchants formed smaller and more exclusive patronage networks in order to keep a closer eye on their tradesmen's debt accumulation and ability to pay, as well as to protect them from outside competition. Merchants also began taking a larger role in outfitting ships at the expense of waterfront tradesmen because of their accumulation of naval stores and provisions. It was a good system for paying debts and balancing accounts. Even merchants like Thomas Cushing Jr., who preferred to freight his furs to London, had to maintain connections with the waterfront community.⁴⁶ Waterfront tradesmen had little ability or even desire to challenge the new arrangements. Only reputable tradesmen from good families garnered a merchant's favor and they benefited from a more stable system.

⁴⁶ Account Book of Thomas Cushing, Jr., 1739-1742, Baker Library, HBS. Of the merchants studied here, Cushing was the least involved with Boston's waterfront community. In his daybook, Cushing only kept track of his portion of the outfitting bill, which was generally 1/4 or 1/8 share of a sloop. As his network indicates, he generally relied on other merchants, his baker, Nathaniel Thwing, or the brewer, Sampson Salter, to supply his portion of the outfitting bill; see appendix, table 6.

This system was based on long-term mutual obligations and trust. Merchants' desire for fluid capital and easy remittances to London in bills of exchange, however, undermined the local ship outfitting and building industries. Waterfront tradesmen fully understood the significance of the merchants' betrayal and many immigrated to other colonial ports, boosting shipbuilding in Philadelphia and New York. Boston's outfitting and shipbuilding industries never fully recovered after King George's War and the port's significance in the Atlantic economy necessarily declined, as did the long-term prosperity of its shortsighted merchants.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 174-184. Nash places more emphasis on the creation of orphans and widows than the abandonment of the ship outfitting and building industries for the decline of Boston after King George's War. He also notes that in addition to the decline in shipbuilding, waterfront tradesmen emigrated from Boston due to Royal Navy impressment.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Throughout the 1740's, Boston's "low sort of people," which according to Governor William Shirley now included "Artificers [tradesmen]" along with "Seafaring Men," simmered in anger at the growing disparity in wealth, lack of opportunity, and oppression by Royal Navy officers and leading Boston authorities through impressment. The latter abuse became increasingly volatile and reached heights beyond the 1690s. In March of 1744, Shirley issued impressment orders for at least 270 seamen in preparation for the assault on Louisbourg, which required the service of "more than three Thousand" seamen. The Royal Navy drew the impressed sailors primarily from Boston. Shirley sought to calm the growing storm over impressment by claiming he would "take effectual Care that whatsoever Men he [Captain Gayton of H.M.S. *Bien Aimé Prize*] may be supplied with, who are Inhabitants of this Province, shall be dismissed upon his Return ... So that not one Inhabitant of the Province shall be carried off by him."¹ As demonstrated in Chapter 3, Royal Navy captains rarely, if ever, willingly returned impressed seamen to their homes, regardless of threats by governors.

Boston's waterfront community suffered from the dual impact of the collapsing shipbuilding industry and economic consequences of elites' support and allowance of large-scale impressment. Those most affected assembled a Town Meeting and hammered out a petition in 1746 protesting the "late repeated Warrants to impress Seamen for his Majesty's Ships." This petition from the lower classes offended Governor Shirley and his Council: "the said Memorial is a bold Insult upon the Authority of the Governour and Council." The petitioners, meanwhile,

¹ William Shirley to the Lords of Trade, December 1, 1747, in Charles Henry Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander of America, 1731 – 1760*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 1: 418; Massachusetts Bay Colony, *Journal of the House of Representatives* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1745-46), 204; Governor Shirley Massachusetts Bay Colony, *Journal of the House of Representatives* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1744), 213. The Journal of the House of Representatives shows impressment requests for mariners by the Royal Navy in 1740, 1741, 1742, 1744, 1745, 1746 and 1748 all of which were approved.

asserted that impressment had caused sailors to flee Boston for the safety of Newport, New York, and Philadelphia where the governments provided “Protection from Impresses.” They also condemned the murder of two local seafarers by the “lawless Rabble” press gangs who acted “like Ruffians.” Press gangs also threatened the town’s essential supplies by illegally seizing men from coasters. Even Governor Shirley recognized this as a considerable threat: “And I must here observe to your Grace, that impressing out of the Coasting Vessels trading to this Town, which receives great part of it’s supplies of Provisions, and almost all it’s Fuel by these Vessels.” The governor continued by noting that this practice was “mischievous to the Inhabitants by cutting ‘em off from these Supplies whilst any of the King’s Ships of War lie here, and in the Winter Season might endanger the starving of the poorer Sort.” The price of food and wood increased sharply as a result of apprehensive coasters avoiding Boston and profit-seeking merchants hoarding and sending food and supplies to the soldiers and sailors at Louisbourg to satisfy their lucrative government contracts. Unemployed tradesmen and impoverished seafarers had difficulty making ends meet and the “once flourishing now sinking Town of Boston” had its avaricious elites to thank.²

On November 17, 1747, the simmering anger at impressment and Boston’s woeful economic disparities erupted into full blown riots after Admiral Charles Knowles ordered his press gangs to sweep the vessels then stationed in Boston harbor. Eerily recalling Boston’s 1689 revolution, Bostonians, elite or otherwise, did not have the gumption to act first: rather the Knowles Riot began with “about three hundred Seamen, all Strangers, (the greatest part Scotch) with Cutlasses and Clubs.” These so-called “Strangers,” however, knew Boston through their

² Massachusetts Bay Colony, *Journal of the House of Representatives* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1745-46), 204; William Shirley to the Duke of Newcastle, December 31, 1747, *Correspondence of William Shirley*, 1; 420-423, quote at 422.

travels and experiences on Boston-based vessels. They swept through the streets, seizing Royal Navy officers and the local sheriff and his deputies to hold as hostages to obtain the release of their impressed brethren. The seafarers arrived at the governor's house soon thereafter. When Shirley questioned their actions "one of 'em arm'd with a Cutlass answer'd me in an Insolent manner it was caus'd by my unjustifiable Impress Warrant." After the confrontation with the governor, Boston tradesmen and laborers joined the rebellious seamen. Together, they broke the windows of the Council House, the seat of power in Massachusetts, and shouted threats at town elites. They, too, challenged the governor, asking why justice had not been served to the Royal Navy seamen who killed the two Boston sailors in 1745. After this verbal altercation, Governor Shirley fled to the Castle Fort in the hopes of marshalling the county militia against the rioters. The Knowles Riot continued for two more days. For Bostonians, the outcome was positive – Admiral Knowles released the roughly twenty local men he had impressed. As usual, the transatlantic seafarers remained in captivity.³

The many seafarers, waterfront tradesmen, and laborers who participated in the riot responded to the abuse of power and demonstrations of conspicuous wealth by elites at their expense. In retrospect, a discerning individual wrote with compassion "when its consider'd, that the immediate Sufferers [of impressment], were people of the lowest Rank, (though I think full as useful as their Neighbours, who, *live at Ease upon the Produce of their Labour*) it is not at all surprising, that their Resentment grew up into Rage." This man appreciated that labor, whether

³ William Shirley to the Lords of Trade, December 1, 1747, *Correspondence of William Shirley*, 1: 412 – 419; For other historical accounts and interpretations of the Knowles Riot see, John Lax and William Pencak, "The Knowles Riot and the Crisis of the 1740's in Massachusetts," *Perspectives in American History* 10 (1976): 163 – 214; Nicholas Rogers, *Press Gang: Naval Impressment and Its Opponents in Georgian Britain* (London: Continuum, 2007), 86-89; Denver Brunsman, "The Knowles Atlantic Impressment Riots of the 1740s," *Early American Studies* 5 (Fall 2007): 324-66 and *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013); Marcus Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 93 – 96.

as sailors or shipbuilders, created the capital for the luxurious homes and conspicuous consumption of Boston's elites. Had he written this statement a decade earlier, he would have found that Boston's waterfront tradesmen also benefitted from the labor and exploitation of seafaring men.⁴

Governor Shirley, conversely, had little appreciation for laborers. He felt entitled to his position, wealth, and power and too often the lower classes challenged his authority. Although he acknowledged the role of foreign seafarers in the Knowles Riot, Shirley explained the riot by hearkening back to the insult he received in 1746 when a Town Meeting resulted in a petition to end his impressment warrants. As he wrote to the Lords of Trade,

What I think may be esteem'd the principal cause of the Mobbish turn in this Town, is it's Constitution; by which the Management of it is devolv'd upon the populace assembled in their Town Meetings; one of which may be called together at any time upon the Petition of ten of the meanest Inhabitants, who by their Constant attendance there generally are the majority and outvote the Gentlemen, Merchants, Substantial Traders and all the better part of the Inhabitants; to whom it is Irksome to attend at such meetings, except upon very extraordinary occasions; and by this means it happens, as it would do among any other Community in a Trading Seaport Town under the same Constitution, where there are about Twenty thousand Inhabitants, consisting among others of so many working Artificers, Seafaring Men, and low sort of people, that a factious and Mobbish Spirit is Cherish'd.

Shirley clearly believed that the "Gentlemen, Merchants, Substantial Traders" or the "better part" of Boston's community had a right to the labor and lives of the "many working Artificers, Seafaring Men, and low sort of people." There was no sense of joint aspirations for the benefit of the entire community, only long-standing attitudes of superiority against those with a "Mobbish

⁴ Anonymous [Samuel Adams?], *An Address to the Inhabitants of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay* (Boston, 1747), 4 (my emphasis in the quote).

Spirit.” Boston had become nearly as rigidly stratified as London with its merchant-elite embracing equally bankrupt morals.⁵

On April 18, 1689, foreign seamen of the H.M.S. *Rose Frigate* mutinied in Boston’s harbor against the abuse of power by their commander, Captain John George. Their actions triggered a riot that resulted in a revolution that generated closer political and economic ties between Boston and London. Boston elites felt compelled to prove their loyalty and control over the town. They launched ill-advised attacks against the French in Canada and allowed their governors and Royal Navy captains to impress and abuse the local maritime community. They eschewed trade with pirates who had fallen out of favor in England due to the Indian Ocean exploits of Henry Every, William Kidd, and others.

The consequences of the revolution and turning away from pirates further linked Boston merchants to English credit and increasingly complicated Atlantic trade networks. Boston’s transatlantic traders accrued large debts to their London counterparts as they imported an ever-growing quantity of English manufactured goods. These same merchants developed their own network of debtors in North America and the West Indies. During the early eighteenth century, they built a large merchant fleet to sustain their growing commerce. They built smaller sloops for the coasting trade and large ships to trade with England and harvest logwood in the Bay of Campeche. In their quest for remittances to England, Boston merchants began employing seafaring men as logwood cutters to increase the proceeds of that harsh but profitable trade. This in turn allowed them to build more vessels and support the vibrant ship outfitting and building industries that generated increased consumption.

⁵ William Shirley to the Lords of Trade, December 1, 1747, *Correspondence of William Shirley*, 1: 412 – 419.

The labor of seafaring men created wealth, stability, and security in colonial Boston but, paradoxically, merchants and ship captains increasingly saw them as adversaries to mistreat. The Reverend Cotton Mather commented on this oppression numerous times after 1690. He remarked on the “Cruelties” sailors suffered at hands of their “*Commanders and Officers* in their own *Ships at Home?*” and admonished “the Masters of our Vessels, that they would not be too like the *Devil* in their *Barbarous Usage* of the *Men*.” He also reprimanded merchants to “make *Poor Seamen*, and their Destitute Families, the Object of your Liberality. The *Merchant* concerned in the Harvest of the Voyage, may do well to bear a part in such *Alms*. His *Estate* has been ventured, when his person has not.” The minister knew sailors suffered economic hardships and, in part, blamed merchants’ greed for it. Mather, unlike Shirley and his fellow Boston elites, considered seamen, tradesmen, and other laborers his fellow man and appreciated their hard labor. He never could, however, reconcile the radical actions sailors took to resist their oppressors with his pious worldview. Perhaps that was because Mather knew from direct experience that Boston transformed when sailors’ resistance turned into action.⁶

Most historians of colonial America have likewise failed to reconcile the significance of the seafaring and waterfront communities to Boston’s political, social, and economic development. Furthermore, few historians of the Atlantic have appreciated how the “Citty upon a Hill” helped create and maintain the Atlantic economy and networks during the eighteenth century. Without delving into the depositions of the *Rose*’s seafarers and comparing those accounts with the ship log and Captain George’s fallacious letter, it would be impossible to discover how these seafaring men transformed Boston through their mutinies in 1689. Without

⁶ Cotton Mather, *The Religious Marriner* (Boston, 1700), 37; Cotton Mather, *The Vial Poured Out upon the Sea* (Boston, 1726), 44-45; Cotton Mather, *The Sailours Companion and Counsellor* (Boston, 1709), 62. For more on Mather’s complex relationship with sailors see, Steven J. J. Pitt, “Cotton Mather and Boston’s ‘Seafaring Tribe’” *The New England Quarterly* 85.2 (June 2012): 222-252.

monitoring the experiences of seafarers on Boston-based vessels in an Atlantic context through portledge bills, ships' papers, merchant accounts, state papers, court cases, and newspapers, it would be difficult to comprehend Boston sailors' internationalization due to impressment in the 1690s, pirates' hatred of Boston's elites after 1717, and the magnitude of the Atlantic logwood trade for Boston's economic growth. Without a clear understanding of Boston's ship outfitting and building industries through qualitative and quantitative analysis of merchants' daybooks, outset accounts, and letters, how Boston's local economy operated during the eighteenth century would remain a mystery. In short, seafarers and ships built colonial Boston and the Atlantic World. They deserve a central place in the city's history.

8.0 APPENDIX

Table 1. Boston Vessel Clearances, 1687 – 1744

Boston Vessel Clearances														
Destination	1687	1706	1707	1713	1714	1717	1718	1722	1723	1724	1728	1734	1739	1744
Coasting - North to Maine South to Pennsylvania	17	134	120	193	210	177	189	187	168	276	179	167	161	164
Newfoundland/Nova Scotia	6	23	12	30	28	37	54	37	25	65	100	63	82	30
Chesapeake/Carolinas	42	29	47	67	65	120	99	142	95	109	106	184	147	116
West Indies/Bays of Campeche and Honduras	156	110	90	187	192	167	140	159	143	195	181	155	196	149
England/N. Europe	13	27	6	25	40	69	62	48	41	69	61	68	48	45
Iberian Peninsula/Wine Islands	25	19	23	15	15	18	38	12	13	17	39	19	11	8
Africa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1
Total Clearances	259	342	298	517	550	588	582	585	485	731	668	656	647	513
Boston Vessel Clearances by Percentages														
Destination	1687	1706	1707	1713	1714	1717	1718	1722	1723	1724	1728	1734	1739	1744
Coasting - North to Maine South to Pennsylvania	6.50%	39.10%	40.30%	37.30%	38%	30%	33%	32%	34.70%	37.80%	26.80%	25.50%	24.90%	32%
Newfoundland/Nova Scotia	2.30%	6.70%	4%	6%	5.10%	6.30%	9.30%	6.30%	5.20%	8.90%	15.00%	9.90%	12.70%	5.90%
Chesapeake/Carolinas	16.20%	8.50%	15.80%	13.00%	11.80%	20.40%	17.00%	24.30%	19.60%	14.90%	15.90%	28%	23%	22.70%
West Indies/Bays of Campeche and Honduras	60.20%	32.10%	30.20%	36.20%	35%	28%	24%	27.20%	30%	26.70%	27.10%	23.60%	30.30%	29.10%
England/N. Europe	5%	7.90%	2%	5%	7.30%	11.70%	10.70%	8.20%	8.50%	9.40%	9.10%	10.40%	7.40%	8.80%
Iberian Peninsula/Wine Islands	9.70%	5.60%	7.70%	2.90%	2.70%	3.10%	6.50%	2.10%	2.70%	2.30%	5.80%	2.90%	1.70%	1.60%
Africa	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.30%	0.00%	0.30%	0.02%

Sources: For 1687 see, Charles F. Carroll, *The Timber Economy of Puritan New England* (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1973), Appendix, Table 4, 140; “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston News-letter* 1706-1707, 1713-1714, 1717-1718, 1722-1724, 1728, 1734, 1739, and 1744. **Note:** Early American newspapers generally under reported their entrances and clearances and, at times, merchants misrepresented their vessels destination or prior port of call for the purposes of smuggling. I believe the overall results, however, are useful for understanding Boston’s trade patterns during the eighteenth century.

Table 2. Boston Vessel Entrances, 1706 – 1747

Boston Vessel Entrances														
	1706	1707	1713	1714	1717	1718	1722	1723	1724	1728	1734	1739	1744	1747
Destination														
Coasting - North to Maine South to Pennsylvania	126	103	250	255	232	222	249	248	359	200	186	193	153	150
Newfoundland/Nova Scotia	12	9	25	25	35	45	34	40	56	74	51	66	31	91
Chesapeake/Carolinas	32	44	54	63	99	103	99	111	116	75	183	89	97	95
West Indies/Bays of Campeche and Honduras	112	59	112	122	138	116	110	97	142	149	98	125	97	73
England/N. Europe	10	14	36	44	75	89	56	47	70	65	51	48	38	33
Iberian Peninsula/Wine Islands	15	22	26	16	27	18	15	25	22	43	39	20	8	12
Africa/Cape Verde Islands	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total Entrances	307	251	503	525	612	593	563	568	765	606	608	544	424	454
Boston Vessel Entrances by Percentages														
	1706	1707	1713	1714	1717	1718	1722	1723	1724	1728	1734	1739	1744	1747
Destination														
Coasting - North to Maine - South to Pennsylvania	41.04%	41.04%	49.70%	48.57%	37.90%	37.40%	44.23%	43.66%	46.93%	33.00%	30.59%	35.50%	36.08%	33.04%
Newfoundland/Nova Scotia	3.91%	3.59%	5.00%	4.76%	5.70%	7.60%	6.04%	7.04%	7.32%	12.20%	8.39%	12.10%	7.31%	20.04%
Chesapeake/Carolinas	10.42%	17.53%	10.70%	12.00%	16.20%	17.40%	17.58%	19.54%	15.16%	12.40%	30.10%	16.40%	22.88%	20.93%
West Indies/Bays of Campeche and Honduras	36.48%	23.51%	22.30%	23.24%	22.50%	19.60%	19.54%	17.08%	18.56%	24.60%	16.12%	23.00%	22.88%	16.08%
England/N. Europe	3.26%	5.58%	7.20%	8.38%	12.30%	15.00%	9.95%	8.27%	9.15%	10.70%	8.39%	8.80%	8.96%	7.27%
Iberian Peninsula/Wine Islands	4.89%	8.76%	5.20%	3.05%	4.40%	3.00%	2.66%	4.40%	2.88%	7.10%	6.41%	3.60%	1.89%	2.64%
Africa/Cape Verde Islands	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%

Sources: “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston News-letter* 1706-1707, 1713-1714, 1717-1718, 1722-1724, 1728, 1734, 1739, 1744, and 1747. **Note:** Early American newspapers generally under reported their entrances and clearances and, at times, merchants misrepresented their vessels destination or prior port of call for the purposes of smuggling. I believe the overall results, however, are useful for understanding Boston’s trade patterns during the eighteenth century.

Table 3. Retention of Boston-based Crews on Ships and Brigs, 1678 – 1734

Retention of Boston-based Crews on Ships and Brigs, 1678 - 1734											
Vessel	Voyage	Departure Month and Year	Crew Size at Departure			Retention from Previously Known Voyage			Percentage of Retention		
			Total	Officers	Sailors	Total	Officers	Sailors	Total Crew	Officers	Sailors
<i>Two Sisters</i> [Ship]	Boston to Bilboa to Boston	June 1678	10	3	7						
	Boston to Bilboa to Boston	November 1679	10	3	7	2	1	1	20.00%	33.33%	14.29%
<i>Hopewell</i> [Ship]	Boston to Barbados to Newfoundland to Boston	November 1693	7	2	5						
	Boston to Antigua to Boston	December 1694	7	2	5	3	1	2	42.86%	50.00%	40.00%
<i>Unity</i> [Ship]	Boston to Barbados to Boston	November 1705	31	8	23						
	Boston to Barbados to Kingsail (IE) to London to Boston	April 1707	28	7	21	16	2	14	51.61%	25.00%	60.87%
<i>Society</i> [Ship]	Boston to Antigua to Boston	May 1707	13	4	9						
	Boston to Jamaica to Boston	September 1707	15	4	11	6	2	4	46.15%	50.00%	44.44%
<i>Dispatch</i> [Ship]	Boston to Port Royal [Nova Scotia]	July 1710	29	11	18						
	Port Royal to France to Boston	October 1710	30	5	25	13	5	8	44.83%	45.45%	44.44%
<i>Mayflower</i> [Brig]	Oporto to Lisbon to Boston	June 1711	6	2	4						
	Unknown	December 1711	6	2	4	1	1	0	16.67%	50.00%	0.00%
<i>Content</i> [Ship]	Boston to Jamaica	April 1712	18	5	13						
	Jamaica to Campeche to South Carolina to Boston	July 1712	18	8	10	7	4	3	38.89%	80.00%	23.08%
<i>Neptune</i> [Ship]	Boston to Kingston to Boston	January 1713	13	2	11						
	Boston to Jamaica [Kingston] to Boston	December 1713	11	2	9	2	1	1	15.38%	50.00%	9.09%
<i>Parkin Galley</i> [Ship]	Boston to Cowes to Boston	September 1718	10	3	7						
	Boston to Barbados	May 1719	9	3	6	3	1	2	30.00%	33.33%	28.57%
<i>Sarah</i> [Brig]	London to Newfoundland to Boston	December 1733	10	2	8						
	Boston to Newfoundland	October 1734	8	2	6	2	1	1	20.00%	50.00%	12.50%
								Average	32.64%	46.71%	27.73%

Sources: Portledge Bills for *Two Sisters*, *Hopewell*, *Unity*, *Society*, *Dispatch*, *Mayflower*, *Content*, *Neptune*, and *Parkin Galley*, Jeffries Family Papers, Boxes 14 – 20, Massachusetts Historical Society; Portledge Bills for the brig *Sarah*, Storke and Gainsborough Papers, Volume 6, New York State Library Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Table 4. Retention of Boston-based Crews on Sloops and Schooners, 1710 – 1766

Retention of Boston-based Crews on Sloops and Schooners, 1710 - 1766												
Vessels	Voyage	Departure Month and Year	Crew Size at Departure			Retention from Previously Known Voyage				Percentage of Retention		
			Total	Officers	Sailors	Total	Officers	Sailors		Total Crew	Officers	Sailors
Elizabeth [Sloop]	Boston to Newfoundland to Boston	June 1710	6	2	4							
	Boston to Newfoundland to Boston	August 1710	6	2	4	5	2	3	Total	83.33%	100.00%	75.00%
Ann & Francis [Schooner]	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	January 1718	5	2	3							
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	May 1718	5	2	3	4	2	2		80.00%	100.00%	66.67%
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	August 1721	4	2	2	1	1	0		20.00%	50.00%	0.00%
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	July 1722	5	2	3	2	2	0		50.00%	100.00%	0.00%
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	December 1729	5	2	3	2	2	0		40.00%	100.00%	0.00%
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	May 1730	5	2	3	3	2	1		60.00%	100.00%	33.33%
Betty [Sloop]	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	April 1744	4	2	2							
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	June 1744	5	2	3	2	1	1		50.00%	50.00%	50.00%
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	August 1744	6	2	4	2	1	1		40.00%	50.00%	33.33%
	Boston to Barbados to Boston	March 1745	7	2	5	1	1	0		16.67%	50.00%	0.00%
	Boston to West Indies to Boston	December 1746	5	2	3	1	1	0		14.29%	50.00%	0.00%
	Boston to Philadelphia to Boston	June 1747	5	2	3	0	0	0		0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Lydia [Schooner]	Boston to Newfoundland to Boston	August 1747	5	2	3	3	2	1		60.00%	100.00%	33.33%
	Boston to Louisburg to Boston	January 1759	5	2	3							
	Boston to Louisburg to Boston	August 1759	5	2	3	1	0	1		20.00%	0.00%	33.33%
	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	November 1759	5	2	3	2	1	1		40.00%	50.00%	33.33%
Dove [Sloop]	Boston to North Carolina to Boston	July 1760	5	2	3	2	1	1		40.00%	50.00%	33.33%
	Boston to ? To Boston	March 1760	5	2	3							
Fox [Sloop]	Boston to Quebec to Boston	July 1760	6	2	4	3	1	2		60.00%	50.00%	66.67%
	Boston to South Carolina to Boston	March 1762	5	2	3							
	Boston to Philadelphia to Boston	May 1762	5	2	3	4	2	2		80.00%	100.00%	66.67%
	Boston to Philadelphia to Boston	July 1762	5	2	3	2	1	1		40.00%	50.00%	33.33%
	Boston to Philadelphia to Boston	August 1762	5	2	3	4	2	2		80.00%	100.00%	66.67%
Biddeford [Sloop]	Boston to Philadelphia to Boston	October 1762	5	2	3	4	2	2		80.00%	100.00%	66.67%
	Boston to Newfoundland to Boston	June 1766	6	2	4							
	Boston to Philadelphia to Boston	October 1766	6	2	4	6	2	4		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Averages										50.20%	69.05%	37.70%

Sources: Portledge Bills for *Elizabeth* and *Ann & Francis*, Jeffries Family Papers, Boxes 17 and 20, Massachusetts Historical Society; Portledge Bills for *Betty*, *Lydia*, *Dove*, *Fox*, and *Biddeford*, Boxes 14-16, Melatiah Bourne Papers, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

Table 5. Boston Vessels Seized by Pirates

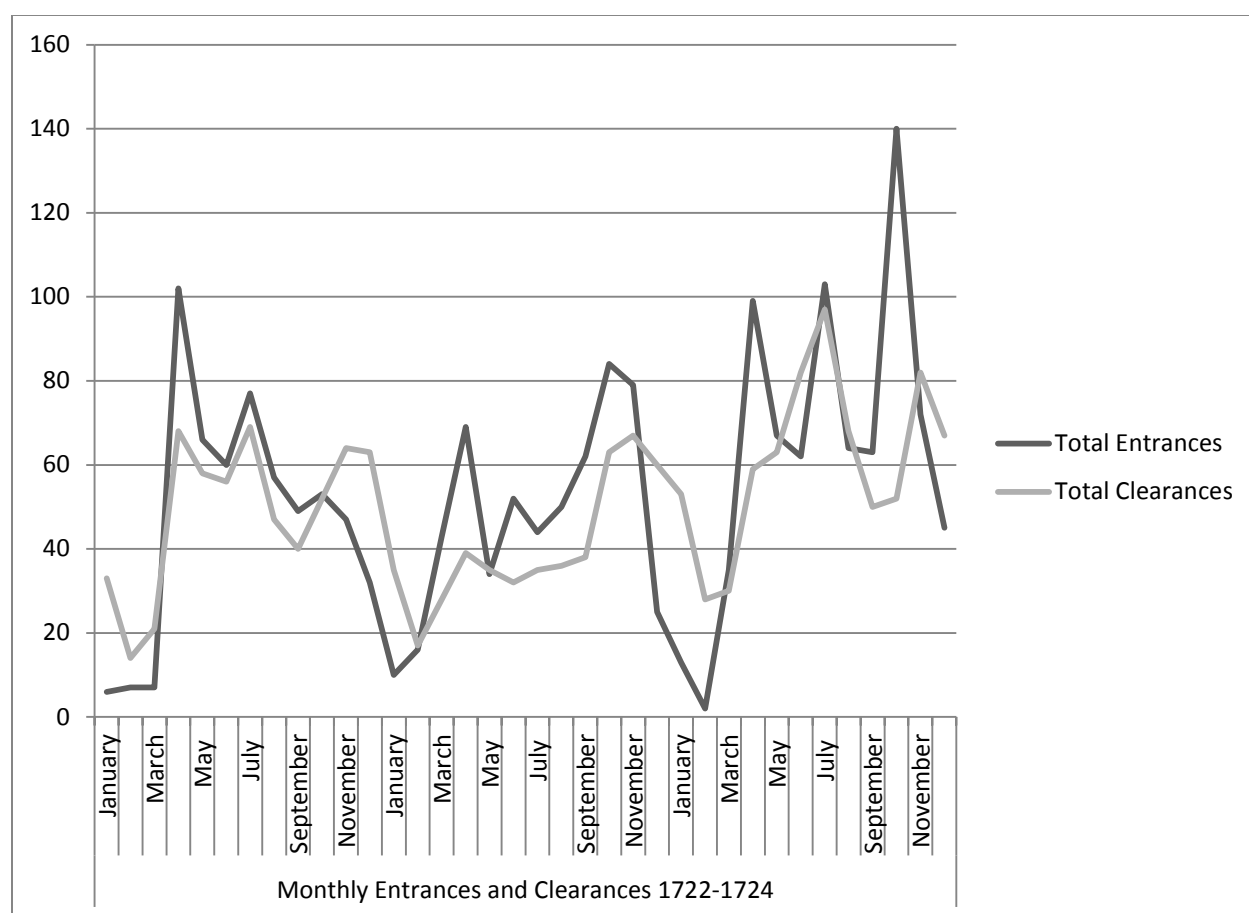
Boston Vessels Seized by Pirates					
Boston-owned or Based Vessels	Captain	Pirate	Estimated Dates	Location	Outcome
Sloop	Captain Beer	Sam Bellamy	April 1717	Near Block Island Lat. 40	Plundered
Sloop	Robert Ingolls	Sam Bellamy	April 1717	Near Cape Cod	Plundered
Sloop	?	Paul Williams	May 10, 1717	Martha's Vineyard	Plundered
Sloop	?	Paul Williams	May 10, 1717	Martha's Vineyard	Plundered
Sloop	Stephen Minot and John Ellis, Owners	Paul Williams	May 11, 1717	Monhegan	Taken
?	Captain Thomas Fox	?	July 1717	?	Plundered
Sloop	Captain Turner	Monsieur Laboar	July 19, 1717	Latitude 36	Plundered
Snow Restoration	Nathaniel Brooker	Captain Napin and Capt. Nichols	August 19, 1717	Near the Bahamas	Plundered
Brig	Thomas Porter	Major Bonnet	August 22, 1717	Near Carolina	Plundered and Incapacitated
"Great Ship"	Christopher Taylor	Edward Teach	November 1717	Near St. Lucia	Burned
Ship Protestant Caesar [400 tons]	Captain William Wyer	Edward Teach	April 1718	Bay of Honduras	Burned
Ship William	?	Captain Richards Teach Consort	Spring 1718	Near South Carolina	Plundered
Schooner	?	Major Bonnet	August 1718	Near Philadelphia	Plundered
Sloop	Benjamin Edie	Richard Worley	November 1718	Near North Carolina	Plundered
Schooner	John Snoad	Richard Worley	November 1718	Near North Carolina	Plundered
Ship	Captain Cooker	William Moudie	December 1718	Near South Carolina	Plundered
Ship Christiana	Captain Jonathan Bull	Edward England	December 1718	Near St. Christophers	Plundered
?	Captain Bosworth	French Pirate	June 1720	Near St. Thomas	Taken
Ship Samuel	Captain Samuel Cary	Bartholomew Roberts	July 1720	Near Newfoundland	Plundered
Snow	Capt. Bowls	Bartholomew Roberts	July 1720	Near Newfoundland	Taken
Snow Pheonix	Joseph Richards	Bartholomew Roberts	July 1720	Near Newfoundland	?
Ship Mary	Henry Fowle	Bartholomew Roberts	September 1720	Near St. Christophers	Plundered
?	?	Philip Lyne	October 1721	?	?
Brig Charles	Captain James Douglass	George Lowther	1721	Near Barbados	?
Ship Greyhound [200 tons]	Captain Benjamin Edwards	George Lowther and Edward Low	Jan. 10, 1722	Bay of Honduras	Burned
Brig	?	George Lowther and Edward Low	Ditto	Bay of Honduras	Burned
Brig	?	George Lowther and Edward Low	Ditto	Bay of Honduras	Sunk
Ship Mary Galley	Captain Peter King	George Lowther and Edward Low	June 1722	Near Boston	Plundered
Brig Rebecca	Captain James Flucker	George Lowther and Edward Low	May 1722	Near Boston	Taken
Ship Dove [120 tons]	Captain Thomas Diamond	John Evans	September 1722	Near Puerto Rico	Plundered
Ship John and William	Captain William Blin	?	26 January 1723	Near Jamaica	Plundered
Pink Stanhope	Captain Andrew Delbridge	Edward Low	1723'	West Indies	Burned
Ship Amsterdam Merchant [100 tons] Worth £1000	John Welland	Edward Low and Charles Harris	May 8, 1723	Near Bermuda	Sunk
Schooner	?	George Lowther	September 1723	Near Newfoundland	?
Sloop	Captain William Clark	Edward Low	July 1723	Near Piscataqua	Crew Killed and Sloop Abandoned
Brig John and Elizabeth	Captain Richard Stanny	George Lowther	August 1723	Near Newfoundland	Plundered
?	Captain Job Prince	Edward Low	August 1723	Near Canso	?
?	Captain Robinson	Edward Low	August 1723	Near Canso	Plundered
?	Captain John Hood	Edward Low	August 1723	Near Canso	Plundered
?	Captain Maccarty	French Pirate	October 1723	Near Jamaica	Taken
Brig Mary	Captain John Moore	John Phillips	September 1723	Near New England	?
Schooner	?	Francis Spriggs	1724	Near Bermuda	Sunk
Brig Daniel	Captain John Hopkins	Francis Spriggs	May 2, 1724	near Martinico	Burned
Brig Prudent Hannah	Captain Thomas Mousel	Captain Signoir Don Benito	June 5, 1724	Near Virginia	Taken
Brig	Captain Maccarty	Captain Signoir Don Benito	1724	Near Virginia	Taken
Brig	Captain Burrington	Captain Signoir Don Benito	1724	Near Virginia	Taken
Sloop	Captain Ebenezar Kent	Captain Shipton	December 1724	Bay of Honduras	Plundered
Ship John and Mary	Captain Thomas Glen	Captain Shipton	December 1724	Bay of Honduras	Taken
Sloop	Captain Robert Peat	?	May 1726	Bay of Honduras	Burned

Sources: *Boston News-letter* 13 May 1717 and 22 July 1717 and 19 August 1717 and 28 October 1717 and 10 March 1718 and 16 June 1718 and 18 August 1718 and 17 November 1718 and 29 December 1718 and 1 August 1720 and 22 August 1720 and 21 November 1720 and 5 December 1720 and 30 April 1722 and 7 May 1722 and 18 June 1722 and 21 March 1723 and 8 August 1723 and 19 September 1723 and 18 October 1723 and 16 July 1724 and 15 April 1725 and 11 February 1725; *Boston Gazette* 27 June 1726; *New England Courant* 17 June 1723; *American Weekly Mercury* 8 August 1723 and 4 October 1723; Extracts of several letters from Carolina, December 17, 1717 and Deposition of Jonathan Bull, December 19, 1718, *CSPC*, vol. 30 (1717-1718), nos. 660 and 797 iv; Deposition of Ralph Merry and Samuel Roberts May 11 and 16, 1717 and Trial of Thomas Davis, October 28, 1717 in John Franklin Jameson ed., *Privateering and Piracy In the Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents* (New York, New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1970), 301-307; Daniel Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, Manuel Schonhorn ed., (New York: Dover Publications, 1999), 326, 338, 355, and 587; Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003), 170.

Table 6. Employment Frequency of Waterfront Tradesmen in Merchant Ship Outfitting and Building Networks

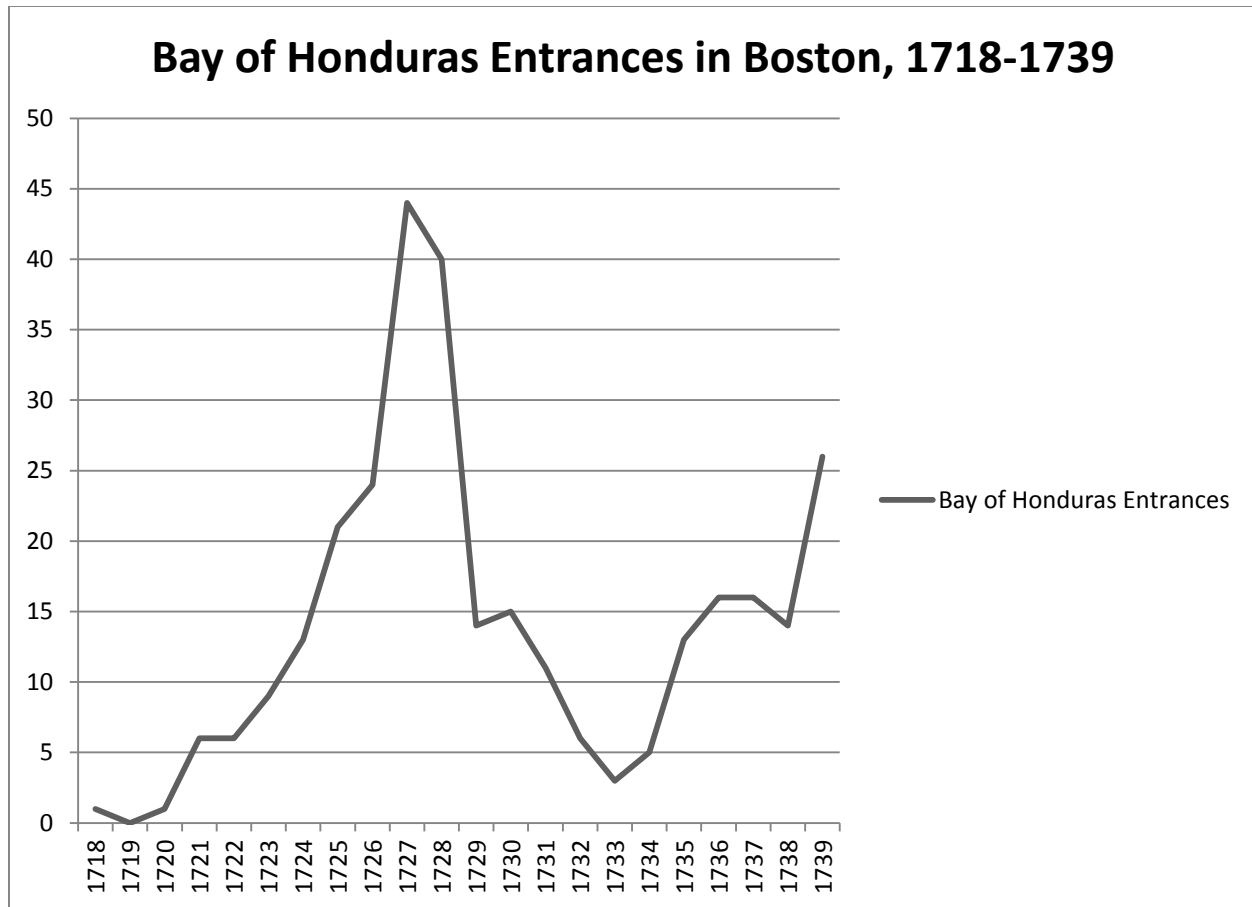
Employment Frequency of Waterfront Tradesmen in Merchant Ship Outfitting and Building Networks													
Merchants		David Jeffries, 1706-1715: Voyage Sample Size: 28			Thomas Hancock, 1737-1739: Voyage Sample Size: 7			Thomas Cushing, 1739-1741: Voyage Sample Size: 7			John Erving, 1740-1745: Voyage Sample Size: 40		
Professions		Names	Percentages	Network Size	Names	Percentages	Network Size	Names	Percentages	Network Size	Names	Percentages	Network Size
Ship Carpenters	Primary	John Greenough	61%	5	Waters and Glidden	100%	1	Warren and Sharp	29%	1	Samuel Clarke	39%	4
	Secondary	Samuel Clarke	14%		N/A	0		N/A	0		William Welch	25%	
Ropemakers	Primary	Edward Gray	39%	2	John Boye	14%	1	Edward Gray	29%	2	Edward Gray	55%	4
	Secondary	John Smith	14%		N/A	0		Thomas Hawding	29%		Hugh McDaniels	33%	
Smiths	Primary	John Baker	54%	8	Ebenezar Bridge	100%	3	Edward Marion	29%	1	Jonathan Brown	95%	5
	Secondary	Samuel Franklin	21%		Joseph Scott	57%		N/A	0		Joseph Hubbard	7%	
Sailmakers	Primary	Charles Morris	46%	3	Alexander Chamberlain	86%	2	Thornton Barrat	14%	1	Newman Greenough	50%	2
	Secondary	Adino Bullfinch	25%		Newman Greenough	14%		N/A	0		Thomas Palfry	35%	
Joiners	Primary	William Brown	21%	8	William Brown	43%	3	Thomas Sherbourne	14%	1	Edward Edes	53%	2
	Secondary	Edward Edes	7%		William Parkman	29%		N/A	0		William Parkman	20%	
Blockmakers	Primary	Thomas Lee	75%	3	Benjamin Snelling	71%	2	James Beighton	14%	2	John Earle	75%	2
	Secondary	Richard Salter	4%		Samuel Aves	29%		James Allen	14%		Thomas Lewis	8%	
Coopers	Primary	Alexander Sherrar	65%	3	Samuel Gooding	100%	1	N/A	0	0	Edward Potter	75%	2
	Secondary	John Stevens	7%		N/A			N/A	0		Joseph Savells	2%	
Butchers	Primary	Joseph & Elizebeth Rogers	25%	9	Peter Roe	29%	3	John Johnson	43%	2	John Beacham	93%	1
	Secondary	Thomas & Hannah Platts	21%		John Johnson	14%		Jonah Langdon	14%		N/A	0	
Bakers	Primary	Nathaniel Oliver	46%	6	James Davenport	71%	1	Nathaniel Thwing	71%	1	James Davenport	40%	2
	Secondary	Nathaniel Baker	18%		N/A	0		N/A	0		Edward Veall	23%	
Brewers	Primary	Nathaniel Oliver	46%	5	John Smith	100%	2	Sampson Salter	43%	1	Sampson Salter	88%	1
	Secondary	Josiah Wadsworth	21%		John Milk	14%		N/A	0		N/A	0	
Merchants	Primary	John Frizzel	11%	16	William Tyler	100%	18	Hezekial Leavitt	43%	14	Daniel Henchman	23%	41
	Secondary	Samuel Penhallow	7%		William Clark	57%		Jonathan Cushing	29%		Samuel Hense	23%	
		Entire Network		154	Entire Network		81	Entire Network		50	Entire Network		105
Source Material: Ships’ Papers, Jeffries Family Papers, Boxes 15-20; Volume TH-1, Daybook, Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, Harvard Business School; Account Book of Thomas Cushing, Jr., 1739-1742, Baker Library, Harvard Business School; Journal of John Erving of Boston, Mass., 1733-1745, Baker Library, Harvard Business School; Note on Method: For each merchant I created a database of their waterfront network based on "outset" accounts. I refrained from including individuals contributing to the vessels’ cargoes in order to emphasize waterfront tradesmen. Thomas Cushing’s accounts only included his ¼ or 1/8 share of the voyages he participated, except for one vessel he outfitted for a merchant partner. The rest of the voyages had completed outset accounts, although there is still a possibility that not all tradesmen’s bills had been accounted for.													

Figure 1. Edward Low's Impact on Boston's Trade, 1722-1724



Sources: "Entrances and Clearances" *Boston News-letter* 1 January 1722 – 31 December 1724

Figure 2. Bay of Honduras Entrances in Boston, 1718-1739



Sources: “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston News-letter* 6 January 1718 – 27 December 1739; “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston Gazette* 10 January 1726 – 17 December 1739; “Entrances and Clearances,” *Weekly Rehearsal* 27 September 1731 – 11 August 1735; “Entrances and Clearances,” *New England Weekly Journal* 21 April 1735 – 25 December 1739; “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston Post-Boy* 6 October 1735 – 10 December 1739; “Entrances and Clearances,” *Boston Evening Post* 22 December 1735 – 31 December 1739.

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